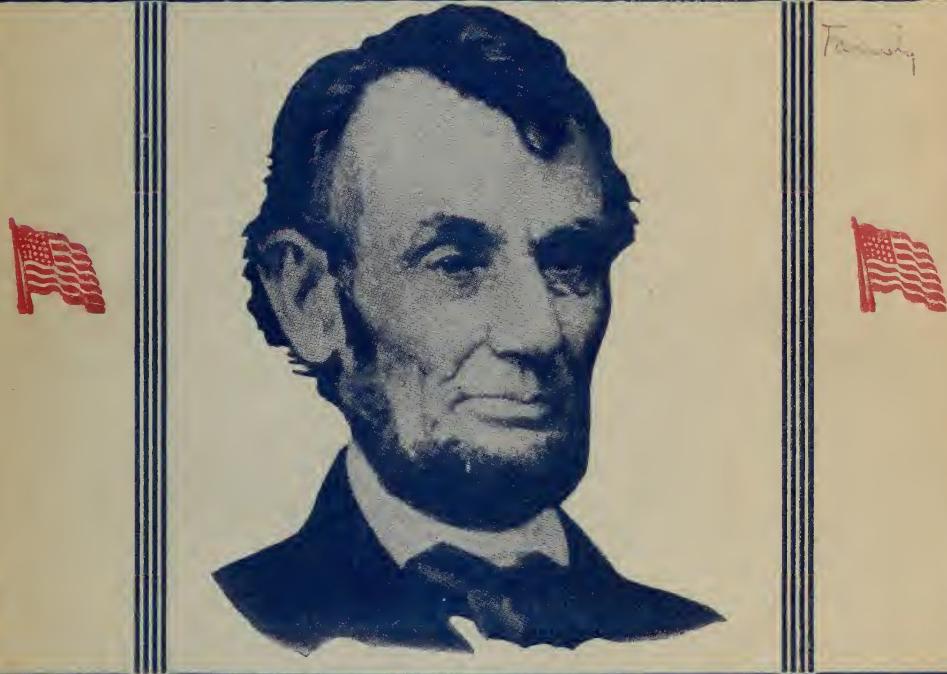


IN
DEFENSE OF THE
LINCOLN FAMILY



JOHN HERR

In Defense of the

Lincoln Family

This book, as the author has said in his foreword, was not written for publication which makes it interesting. The author, Mr. John Herr, of Lebanon, Indiana, has made a lifetime study of the Lincoln family and the Lincoln country. He has traveled and studied the Lincoln country so thoroughly that his maps are drawn from memory. The Lincoln family has been his hobby. His conclusions and reactions to what others have written on the Lincoln family were written by him just as if he were frankly expressing himself in conversation, sometimes most emphatically, to a sympathetic listener. Consequently, there is no attempt made to hold his punches or to polish his criticisms of or his objections to what the historians have written. He says what he thinks, and tells why he thinks as he does. Had Mr. Herr been writing for publication he might have been more cautious, but he would have been much less interesting.

The over-all idea in the book is the defense of the Lincoln family; a vindication of the villifications made by writers and biographers who are quoted. Thomas Lincoln has been made the central figure and it is the purpose of the author to show that while in the prime of his life—especially while he lived in Kentucky, where the darkest stories seemed to be fastened on him and his family—that these writers, in the light of modern knowledge, were woefully ignorant of the facts about Thomas Lincoln.

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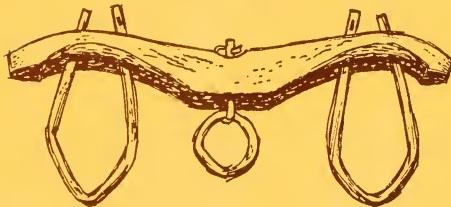
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JOHN HERR

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**“Surely Each Man Has
As Strong A Motive Now
To Preserve Our Liberties
As Each Had Then To
Establish Them”**

A. Lincoln

(Message to Congress July 4, 1861)

IN
DEFENSE OF THE
LINCOLN FAMILY

BY
JOHN HERR



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To
OUR PROTECTOR

FOREWORD

The pages of this work were never written for publication. The original manuscript, however, fell into the hands of a friend who said, "Have it published--we'll take the criticism if you'll give us the praise."

So, remember, Mr. Critic, say what you please, the author is protected.

John Herr

Lebanon, Indiana
August 1, 1943

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
Lincoln Country in Washington County, Kentucky	
CHAPTER TWO	13
Lincoln's Mother in Her Childhood Days	
CHAPTER THREE	26
The Charge Against Lucy (Shipley) Hanks	
CHAPTER FOUR	40
The Birthplace of Abraham Lincoln	
CHAPTER FIVE	53
The Birthplace of Abraham Lincoln (Continued)	
CHAPTER SIX	71
The Indiana Home	
CHAPTER SEVEN	92
Life in Indiana	
CHAPTER EIGHT	111
The Move to Illinois	
CHAPTER NINE	119
The Lincoln Country in Illinois	
CHAPTER TEN	134
The Lincoln Relics	
CHAPTER ELEVEN	157
The New Orleans Trip	
CHAPTER TWELVE	172
Life in New Salem	
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	192
Life in New Salem (Continued)	
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	214
Lincoln in Law	
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	231
The President Abraham Lincoln	

PHOTOGRAPHS

Old home of Frank Berry in Washington County, Kentucky, where Nancy Hanks made her home after her aunt died, and where it is now thought she and Thomas Lincoln were married. House was built in 1797.

Well on Josiah Crawford's farm which Lincoln helped dig and wall. Trees on site of old cabin.

Page 60

Pigeon Creek Church in Spencer County where Lincoln's sister, Sarah Lincoln Grigsby, was buried. Old Grigsby monument on right by new stone.

The John J. Hall place, part of Thomas Lincoln farm. Present home of Nancy A. Hall and "Abe the Second."

Page 96

Nancy A. Hall and son, "Abe the Second," taken at the first Thomas Lincoln monument at Shiloh Church in Illinois.

Musket used by Abraham Lincoln in Black Hawk War, 1832.

Page 130

MAPS

Lincoln Country, Washington County, Kentucky.

Page 40

Homes of Thomas Lincoln in Kentucky

Page 80

Thomas Lincoln In Illinois

Page 140

Chapter One

THE LINCOLN COUNTRY IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, KENTUCKY

On a bronze tablet at the old home of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois, is this inscription:

"Abraham Lincoln walks the streets
of Springfield at midnight."

The sentiment expressed in these words is felt by not only the author of them, but by thousands of admirers who visit this Lincoln home annually from the world over.

Recently, in this year, 1942, we have made numerous trips into Kentucky; Spencer County, Indiana; Coles County, New Salem, and Springfield, Illinois; followed the Lincoln trails between these localities from one to the other, and at no time or place in any of them would the sentiment, "Lincoln walks here at midnight," be out of place.

Even in Washington County, Kentucky--the last home of the grandfather of Lincoln, and the boyhood home of his father, Thomas Lincoln--the feeling is forever present that the ghost of Lincoln keeps searching over the land, into the archives and the old log homes still existing which were one time familiar places to his father and mother for the facts he never knew,

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

and which would have lifted a great load of sadness he carried to the grave.

In the above named county the records show that only one vote was cast for Lincoln and Hamlin in the Presidential Election in 1860; but, due to increased popularity in passing years one local authority has said that no less than one hundred men have come forward to claim the honor of casting that one vote.

In our three separate trips to the Kentucky Lincoln country it was gratifying to note the great change that must have taken place from 1860 to the present time. Every citizen met in each of the trips now seems to be proud to recite Lincoln lore and make claims, tardy as they may be, which reflect credit to them and to their interesting country.

They now say regretfully that their county officials were dilatory and slept on their rights while adjoining counties took over fame and glory which they now claim rightfully belongs to Washington County. The first home of Thomas Lincoln and his wife Nancy, removed to Harrodsburg and now exhibited as the Marriage Shrine in that town, once believed to be the cabin in which they were married, was one of the losses sustained by Washington County for the lack of civic foresight.

All that is left of this historic spot is the site itself with a fine spring of water which is still the only source of supply for the family now living in a comparatively modern bungalow near the old cabin site.

To trail the steps of Lincoln from his birthplace in Kentucky to his boyhood home in Indiana, to his home in Illinois, to New Salem, to

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN KENTUCKY

Springfield, to the White House, to Gettysburg, to the Ford Theater and across the little street to a room where his life merged into the realm of the "ages" and then to the tomb in Springfield; in all this life's journey of fifty-six years, there is no part of it that one could say that Lincoln did not "walk at midnight."

Who but the ghost of Abraham Lincoln led R. M. Thompson, a living relative of Lincoln's mother to the dusty archives in the ancient courthouse in Springfield, Kentucky, where he found and brought to light the marriage record of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks in 1882, with the certificates of marriage performed by the minister who married them, Jesse Head? Sworn affidavits are in existence which were made by Washington County residents, too late for Lincoln to ever know, to the effect that Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were not only married in that County, but that three children were born to them there, including Abraham Lincoln, the President.

This alleged Washington County birthplace of Lincoln was visited by us in the fall of this year of 1942. In a comparatively new house within a hundred feet of the exact location of the old cabin lives a Mr. Pinkston, his wife and two young daughters. Pinkston is a life-time resident in that locality, his father having owned the place on which he lives while he was yet a mere boy. He not only was familiar with the old cabin, but was also well informed as to its history and the stories and legends surrounding it from its beginning. Since his narration we have checked his story with local history, both written and by interviews with

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

some Springfield residents, one of whom, Mr. Joseph Polin, an attorney, is considered authority on local Lincoln lore. Pinkston's story was found to be exactly as we found the facts from other sources, and we have no hesitancy in giving his version.

This cabin sight is strictly in the pioneer Lincoln country and is situated about one-quarter mile northwest of a string-like cluster of small houses now called Poortown; but we believe formerly, Beechland. A guess might put the number of inhabitants at fifty, but if old unoccupied houses are considered, there may have been at one time in its history one hundred people living there. It is in the neighborhood of seven miles northeast of Springfield, and can be found by searching the hills on a very winding road which in places would still be difficult for horseback riders to follow, to say nothing of wagons or automobiles.

The string-like shape of the village is due to the fact that the houses are built along the north and west shore of a stream which varies in width from a mere trickle in a dry time to a torrent possibly seventy-five or a hundred feet wide in a rainy season. It is called Beech Fork, and empties into Salt River some place north among the hills.

Evidently, the town in its greatest period of prosperity depended on the old grist mill; which now in its very dilapidated condition houses tobacco, a lot of old grain spouts, elevators, shafts, cog wheels of wooden construction, bins, and rats. It was a two-story building in its later days and run by steam power when Pinkston's father operated it, but in his

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN KENTUCKY

memory the mill was run by water power. Five different dam sites can yet be located up the creek from the old mill; his father constructed the last of concrete at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars, but hardly finished it before a freshet washed around the end which required almost complete reconstruction.

While Pinkston's father owned the mill, the bridge over the mill race which is near the mill washed out. Pinkston's father appealed to the county commissioners to rebuild the bridge, since it was the only way the public could possibly cross over to the mill. The commissioners told him if he wanted a new bridge, to build it himself; that when the race was dug the mill owners no doubt had to build the bridge over it. The controversy ended in a law suit. The records were searched with the result that in 1802, the oldest record to be found, stated there was at that time a mill race and a bridge over it. The commissioners considered themselves licked; consequently, built the new bridge. It is doubtful if the bridge is ten feet wide and the boards are probably twelve feet long. It has no banisters at all. In a vague way we have an opinion that a mill of some description was in operation on the site of this old standing mill as early as 1785 or 1790, more than a hundred years before Pinkston's father had his law suit with the Washington County commissioners.

The old mill is at the extreme north end of the row of houses, all of which are on the inner side of the right angle; bluffs too abrupt for houses form the bank on the opposite side of the creek; however, a ford crosses to the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

bluff side of the branch, which natives might dare use, but no tenderfoot is likely to be attracted to the opposite side. A steep climb on the south bank over the bluff was as far as we could see. It might have been a road.

This is the little place where the Berrys, the Brumfields, and the Lincolns--the three pioneer families which moved out of Virginia in 1782--all came to the mill; not once dreaming that what they did, where or when they did it would ever be of the least interest to any other than their own immediate relatives for more than one generation at most.

The Lincoln cabin site, less than one-quarter mile northwest of this ancient hamlet is on the east side of the road, up a slight rise and about seventy-five feet back from the road. The land around the site is cleared to the extent of forty or fifty acres, with the exception of an occasional tree and considerable young growth of recent years, but there is plenty of evidence that the pioneer used all the near-by land for cultivation in earlier times.

The old road which leads to this Lincoln country leaves Springfield from the west side of the courthouse, bears a little to the east and in pioneer days was the direct route to Frankfort. The road with deep cuts over the sharp little hills is still unimproved, and bears evidence of having been traveled long.

About five miles out from Springfield this historic pioneer trail intersects a very similar road which runs in a general east and west direction. At this intersection the road running west is now improved and leads out to road 55 which connects Springfield to Bloomfield

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN KENTUCKY

northwest. East from the intersection the road is still unimproved, and about one mile farther it turns southeast, finally loses all semblance of refinement, takes on the appearance of a path among the hills and follows a course similar to what a loose reined horse would take for a path of least resistance.

Three-fourths of a mile after making the turn southeast, the cabin already spoken of is passed, rather, the place where the cabin once stood. Then the road turns more directly south for a quarter mile between the site and Beech Fork Creek, follows the creek east and makes a U turn following the left bank of the stream between the string of cottages as far as the old mill at the north edge of the village, where the road crosses over the mill race, turns west again for a distance of about one-eighth of a mile, then due north the same distance, then due east and finally northeast. This is as far as we tried to go, as this is where Thomas Lincoln turned his horse through the gate which led up to the old Frank Berry two-story log house through the field about a quarter mile west where the maiden Nancy lived.

Going back to the site of the cabin by the spring near the road before coming to the little village of Poortown, we may say that Mr. Pinkston, who is about forty-five years old, in his recital, told of playing in the old log house about 1900, eleven years before its removal to Harrodsburg. He related that when his father purchased the farm, now reduced to fifty-four acres, the former owner reserved the cabin. He left it intact for some time, then he tore it down and the logs were piled by the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

side of the road where they remained until they were sold to the Pioneer Park Association at Harrodsburg, to which place they were hauled in 1911. The owner received three hundred dollars for them, while Washington County lost a valuable pioneer relic. In our opinion, the cabin became far less valuable as a relic by the mere fact of its removal to another location, far less valuable for the very purpose it was intended to serve.

Asked why this memorable cabin was allowed to be taken and irretrievably lost to Washington, Mr. Pinkston replied that at the time of its removal it was not regarded of any historic value. While he himself had always been a great Lincoln admirer, the attitude toward Lincoln in Washington County was the reverse of admiration; the citizens still remaining too much in the same frame of mind as in Civil War times, when Lincoln's popularity could be calculated by the one lone vote cast for him for the Presidency in 1860. The removal of this cabin, however, may have been the thunderbolt which did much to jar them from their deep rooted erroneous judgment of this great man. Now, too late of course, there is a substantiated opinion among authorities of Lincoln lore in this county that the birth of Lincoln occurred in this identical cabin. This great honor, now also claimed by Larue County, in our opinion is much better supported by facts, affidavits, and traditions in Washington County than in the county now possessing the great Memorial building.

The story of the origin of this cabin is fairly authentic, being supported by both documentary evidence as to the period of its con-

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN KENTUCKY

struction, and family tradition as to the manner in which it came into existence. It was in the year of 1782 that the three families came to make their homes in Kentucky; although it is known that Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President entered land some two years previous to actually moving out of Virginia to occupy his new possessions. Through the Shipley family, descendants of Rachel Shipley Berry, wife of Francis Berry, Sr., the story is handed down and has been recorded by Orvil W. Baylor, local historian of Washington County, that on arrival of the new emigrants, Francis Berry, Sr. selected the cabin site because it had a clear spring of water. The Berry entry included this site and was a tract amounting to four hundred acres originally.

Abraham Lincoln, Sr., according to Washington County tradition, and Francis Berry both had married sisters in Virginia and consequently were brothers-in-law. Lincoln with his family was induced to remain with Berry long enough to build the first cabin before going on northward to build one for himself on his own land; but, as family tradition tells it, before the Berry cabin was finished Lincoln had been persuaded by Berry and the women folks to build a house on Berry's land near by for companionship and safety for at that time Indians had become unusually hostile to Kentucky settlers. Now it appears from local Washington County history that the Lincolns never moved out of the Berry neighborhood to the land on Floyd Creek farther north which Lincoln had entered a year or so before their migration into Kentucky.

This first Berry cabin (yet to be seen in

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

the "Marriage Temple" in Harrodsburg) is a single room, hewed and nine logs high, rock and mud chinked, puncheon floor with a roof of clapboards held down with wooden pegs through poles across the roof. Native stones were used to build the fireplace with sticks and mud to finish the low chimney. Mr. Pinkston now uses a broad flat stone about three by four feet which he has every reason to believe was the original hearthstone. It bears evidence of having been exposed to heat at some time in its history, is very smooth on the upper side, and could easily have answered that purpose. As the house had in its later years been used for other than living quarters the floor and hearth had been removed. The supposed hearthstone remained on the premises after the cabin had been torn down and removed. When Pinkston himself became the owner of the place he walled up the spring about a foot above the level of the ground and placed the stone on top for a cover. There are several letters carved on the top of the rock, but not plain enough now to make into a word.

It is not known just how long the Berrys occupied this cabin as a residence, and it is not known by the writer how far away from it the Lincolns built their home; but it is known definitely that the Berrys built a more pretentious home about a mile or less northwest, and the Lincolns about three-quarters of a mile still farther west on the same road (the old Springfield and Frankfort road) each of which is now known as the Lincoln or Berry pioneer homes.

A replica of the Lincoln cabin stands where the original one stood. A branch crosses the

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN KENTUCKY

road about three hundred feet west and runs diagonally northeast, leaving the cabin sitting in a triangular strip of ground of some three or four acres, the east side bounded by a sort of wet weather cut or branch which flows into the branch mentioned, the branch going by the name of Lincoln's Run since pioneer days. The State of Kentucky has now taken over thirty-seven acres of the surrounding land and converted it into a State park, gratifying evidence that no more sleeping at the switch is to be tolerated. What a wonderful historic layout exists here in a few miles for Washington County to develop and bring back to her some of the lost glory that is hers. With the Berrys, his grandparents, and his father and mother, Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, certainly the great Lincoln "Walks here at midnight."

A few rods below the junction of the Lincoln's Run branch and the small dry branch mentioned is the place pointed out near which Abraham Lincoln, Sr. was killed by Indians. The location was established satisfactorily for Washington County citizens through the Litsey family from father to son. Uriah Litsey became the second owner of the Francis Berry, Sr. farm. His son, Judge Berry Litsey, was the father of David Litsey who was taken over the Lincoln country by his father when a young boy and his memory is the basis for the location of the sites around which the stories and traditions of pioneers in this interesting country are told.

About half way from the Lincoln homestead to that of the senior Berry farm and about a quarter mile south is Beech Fork which runs almost parallel with the old Frankfort road. On a

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

rounding bluff on the north side of the creek is the remains of an old pioneer cemetery. At this place the pioneer Litsey pointed out to his son the grave of Abraham Lincoln, Sr. killed in 1788. This story is probably the most direct and authentic of any story extant regarding the burial place of the senior Lincoln.

Chapter Two

LINCOLN'S MOTHER IN HER CHILDHOOD DAYS

At the junction of the Frankfort road and the Lincoln's Run and Beech Fork roads adjacent to the Lincoln pioneer cabin is the site of the schoolhouse where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks met as school children. As it is said that Nancy came to live with her uncle and aunt, Francis and Rachel Berry, at the age of eleven years, their respective ages at first meeting were not less than eleven and seventeen, providing they had never met before Nancy came to her relatives from Harrodsburg where there seems to be records in court concerning Nancy's mother, Lucy (Shipley) Hanks, from which the presumption is gained that that town was her former home.

Washington County Lincoln lore authorities contend that Thomas Lincoln's mother was a Shipley, and a sister of Lucy Shipley, the mother of Nancy Hanks. If that contention is correct, then Thomas Lincoln and his wife Nancy were first cousins. If they were cousins, then it is not at all unlikely that their first acquaintance began much farther back than their school days at Lincoln's Run school at the ages of eleven and seventeen.

Robert Shipley, of Virginia, it is recorded had five daughters, as follows: Mary, married

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Abraham Lincoln, Sr. in 1770, and died when her fourth child, Thomas, was born in 1776; buried in Virginia--Rachel, married Richard Berry, Sr., the uncle to whom Nancy came to make her home at the age of eleven--Ann, married David McCord; no further record--Naomi, married Robert Mitchel, mother of a daughter captured by the Indians; who having been recaptured after several years came to the Berrys to make her home and was closely associated with her cousin Nancy while they both made their home there. The pioneer Mitchel Indian story is complete and one of the most interesting of all the Kentucky tragedies in its early settlement--Lucy, mother of Nancy Hanks, whose father is said to be a James Hanks. More will be said of this marriage later.

While the Hanks genealogy so far as it goes above seems well authenticated in Washington County, William H. Herndon in his life of Lincoln (p. 9) states that the first representative of the Hanks family coming to this country was Thomas Hanks who entered a hundred acres of land in Lancaster County, Virginia, early in 1653; and in a generation moved across the Rappahannock River where Lincoln's ancestors remained for more than a hundred years. Joseph Hanks, a great-grandson of the original Thomas and the maternal great-grandfather of Abraham Lincoln, at the age of fifty-nine mortgaged his farm in Hampshire County, in Virginia in 1784 (two years after the Lincoln-Berry-Brumfield exodus) and set out for Kentucky. Then he says, "Among the eight children who, with his wife, accompanied him was a daughter named Lucy, the unmarried mother of Nancy Hanks who in 1806 be-

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

came the wife of Thomas Lincoln." Here Herndon makes a positive statement which should at least have been made with caution; but it does indicate as well as is now known about the correct age of Nancy Hanks, which, if she was born in Virginia, was a babe in arms of less than a year old when she was brought to Kentucky, if her age at marriage in her twenty-third year is correct.

Now, by the statement of Herndon, Nancy's mother was a Hanks by birth which is contrary to our informant in Washington County, Mr. Joseph Polin, who tells us that she was a Shipley. In our judgment Mr. Polin is much nearer correct than Herndon.

In pursuing this phase of the President's ancestors on his mother's side we may set out some facts which to us seem consistent with the records at this time, viz: Nancy Hanks was Lincoln's mother; Lucy Shipley was the maiden name of Nancy's mother; Lucy was the daughter of Robert Shipley, Jr. as above; the Shipleys came to Kentucky about the same time Joseph Hanks came, and possibly they came together.

Herndon was correct as to the number of children Joseph Hanks had as a probated will in Nelson County, Kentucky, made on the eighth day of January, 1793, and probated on the fourteenth day of May of the same year names the following five sons and three daughters: Thomas, Joshua, William, Charles, Joseph, Elizabeth, Polly, and Nancy. This latter name, the daughter Nancy seems to be the source of endless confusion in this muddled romance of two young emigrant girls who came out of Virginia into Kentucky near the same year, possibly in the same emi-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

grant train in about 1784, one named Nancy Hanks; the other a baby girl by the same name, and living not so very far away.

Only one question remains to be answered: which, if it ever is, will set at rest for all time the dark and ugly background ascribed to the ancestors of Lincoln by his many biographers who have seemed so anxious to magnify one possible misstep into a Hydra-headed monster surpassing any scandal ever before charged to an innocent family, with no cause, apparently, but unjustifiable jealousy because one member of that family had reached undying fame. If there had been proof positive that Lucy Shipley, Nancy Hank's mother, became Lucy Hanks by legitimate marriage while still in Virginia there could have been no incentive, possibly, for all the scandalous stories and unwarranted charges of the "putrid pool" type which were piled at the cabin door of Thomas Lincoln.

There are three children of Joseph Hanks and two grandchildren who come into the complicated Lincoln history: one, the supposed father of Lincoln's mother; two daughters, Elizabeth and Nancy; the grandsons Dennis F. and John, cousins, the latter preceding the Lincolns to Illinois by two years, and Dennis moving with them in 1830. Nancy, the unmarried mother of Dennis, who later married Levi Hall, will be mentioned quite often later in these writings. Elizabeth with her husband, Thomas Sparrow, followed the Lincolns to Indiana. Both died the same year and about one week before Lincoln's mother, who died October 5, 1818.

Now it can be seen by the above facts that

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

John and Dennis Hanks were full cousins; and that Elizabeth Sparrow was a full aunt of both of them. From here on a little surmising must take place, not because of known facts, but of certain family traditions which have come along with the families of Hanks, Halls, and Lincolns for four or five generations, but which we regard almost as dependable as authentic records.

Both John and Dennis Hanks said that they were cousins to Lincoln's mother as well as to one another; in which case Nancy, the mother of Dennis would also be the aunt of the Nancy whom Thomas Lincoln married. This would clear up the mystery of two Nancy Hanks in the Lincoln family. Tradition also has it that Elizabeth Sparrow was an aunt to Nancy Lincoln, which of course would make John Hank's father an uncle, and Dennis Hank's mother, who married Levi Hall, an aunt to her.

Now the question, how was Nancy Lincoln a cousin to John and Dennis Hanks? There is but one way for this relationship to exist, and that would be for one of Joseph Hank's sons to have been Nancy's father. But Thomas, Joshua, William, Charles, and Joseph were all that were named in their father's will except the three daughters, and none of these five sons married Nancy's mother. How did their cousin relationship come about? Since we believe cousin relationship existed between them, a theory, at least should be produced.

It was about nine years after Joseph Hanks and his family came to Kentucky before he made his will, in Nelson County on January 8, 1793, nine years after Lucy Shipley Hanks and her daughter Nancy came. In this case, possibly

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

rare, it is not unreasonable to believe that an older son of Joseph Hanks remained in Virginia, and this son was the father of Nancy, the mother of Lincoln. Some biographers have made the statement that Lucy's husband was a James Hanks. This may or may not be true, but if true James Hanks was not mentioned in Joseph Hanks' will, and the will specifically says that after his wife's death his property is "to be equally divided between all my children." Our theory here would be a little stronger if this quotation from the will read "to be equally divided between all my living children," which would indicate that some, at least one of his children, were not living at the time he made his will in 1793.

But if this elder son was not living, and he was the father of the child Nancy, a granddaughter of Joseph Hanks, he also failed to mention her in his will as an heir. We believe there are some significant happenings about this time in Lucy Shipley Hanks' life which might explain the reason for the fact that neither Nancy nor her father was named in the will.

On November 24, 1789, a grand-jury report charged Lucy Hanks with fornication in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Since she failed to appear in court, the charge was dismissed on May 25, 1790; at which time, the records show she had become the wife of Henry Sparrow on April 30, 1790. This would indicate that her marriage might have been the excuse for the dismissal of the charge against her. In all these records she is known as Lucy Hanks and not Lucy Shipley. Her name is signed neither as Miss nor Mrs.

In 1796 Thomas Sparrow, a brother of Henry

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

who married Lucy Hanks, married Elizabeth Hanks, and Herndon states that Nancy, "when quite young, was taken from her mother and sent to live with her uncle and aunt, Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow." Washington County authorities say Nancy was taken to live with her uncle and aunt, Richard and Rachel Berry, at the age of eleven.

As Nancy's aunt Elizabeth was not married to Thomas Sparrow until 1796, she would have been about twelve years old if taken to their home at their marriage date, and could not have lived with them at all if she had been taken to the Berrys to live. This latter move to the Berrys would have been about 1795, which corresponds with Washington County tradition fairly well.

Frances Berry signed the marriage license of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks as guardian. We know of no record of the date of Berry's appointment as her guardian; but, then as now, it is not at all likely that Nancy would have needed a guardian if she did not have property of some description which she had heired some time before she would become of age. Since her mother was still living at the time of her marriage, there seems no probable way for her to come in possession of property except through her father; who, so far as we have knowledge, did not come to Kentucky with Lucy and her baby Nancy.

At this stage of Nancy's life there are two or three interesting questions: Where was the child Nancy up to the time she was "taken from her mother and sent to live with her aunt Elizabeth Sparrow"? Whom did she heir property

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

from, and at what time in her life did she come in possession of it? If her father did not come to Kentucky with Nancy and her mother, why did he not? And, just what person or persons were interested in bringing charges against Lucy before the Grand Jury, and for what purpose?

Existing records of Lucy Hanks all seem to be in the courthouse in Harrodsburg, Mercer County, where the charge of fornication was brought against her, which is proof sufficient that this was her home. Unless we doubt the statement of Herndon that "the child Nancy was taken from her mother, etc." we must conclude that the child was living with her mother in Harrodsburg also. Under the circumstances in which Lucy was placed when the charge of fornication was placed against her, it seems reasonable to believe that this would be the time her child might be taken from her, or about November 24, 1789; in which case the child Nancy would have been about five years old. This would have been about seven years before Thomas Sparrow married Nancy's aunt, Elizabeth Hanks, to whose home Herndon says she was taken; or six years before she went to her aunt and uncle, Richard Berry's home to live, as Washington County authorities say. With no better authority to say than a mere guess, it is our opinion that Nancy's aunt, Elizabeth Hanks, took Nancy to her home while she was still living at her own father's (Joseph Hanks) in Nelson County near Bardstown. Here Nancy made her home until Elizabeth married Thomas Sparrow in 1796, when she then went to the Berrys'.

Now, since we believe the child Nancy went to her grandfather's home when she was taken

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

from her mother in 1789 and was under the care of her then unmarried aunt Elizabeth, she was a grandchild in her grandfather Joseph Hanks' home at the time he made his will in January, 1793. Since Nancy's father was not mentioned in her grandfather's will, it is certainly reasonable to believe he was dead, and it seems just as reasonable to believe the granddaughter might be left out to avoid certain complications common in the settlement of some estates where quarrels or friction might exist and efforts are made to set the will aside. In this case Nancy would have been a child of about nine years in the grandfather's home when he was dividing his property, and a direct settlement made to the child would ward against any possible anticipated trouble in final settlement of his estate.

Consequently, Nancy became a property holder at about nine years of age and a guardian would naturally be appointed for her. It is of record that Richard Berry was her guardian, and remained so until her marriage in June of 1806, when she was married to Thomas Lincoln. Just why Richard Berry was chosen as her guardian can only be a surmise, but there seems no doubt that he was well qualified as he is mentioned as a "leader in many pioneer enterprises." At a sale in Washington County he is listed as the purchaser of a book, and at his own sale after his death the appraisers listed "6 bedsteads, 2 flax wheels, 1 book case, 2 bureaus, 3 tables, 10 chairs and 1 yanky clock." Also listed for sale (possibly August, 1829) were: 9 slaves, 14 head of cattle, 2 yoke of oxen, 18 head of sheep, 22 head of hogs, 6 head of horses and a

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

mule. Beside his evident qualifications, he was also a cousin of the girl Nancy and no doubt found the home for her at his father's, Richard Berry, Sr., when she went there at "the age of eleven."

John Berry--an older brother or possibly an uncle of Richard Berry, the guardian of Nancy--served on the Grand Jury which placed the charge against Lucy Hanks in Mercer County in November of 1789, and again signed her certificate of age when she married Henry Sparrow the next April. If John Berry was a brother of Richard Berry, Jr., then he was a nephew to Lucy Hanks, as John's mother was a sister to Lucy. If so, we have the unusual circumstance of a nephew placing a charge of fornication against his own aunt, and in five months he was signing a certificate as to her age for her marriage, which no doubt gave the court an excuse for the dismissal of the charge.

Now, whether by design or otherwise, the Grand Jury of which John Berry was a member succeeded in bringing an indictment against Lucy Hanks which resulted in the action, with scarcely a doubt, of taking Lucy's daughter Nancy away from her and placing her in the home of her grandfather, Joseph Hanks, and under the care of her aunt, Elizabeth.

We have now the following questions: Was Lucy Hanks ever married? If so, who was her husband? What became of him? Our theory is that Washington County authorities are right in their contention that Lucy Hanks' maiden name was Lucy Shipley, and we can see no other reason but to believe her husband was a son of Joseph Hanks, Sr. Under the circumstances as

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

they appear from records, tradition, and reasoning, we have come to the conclusion that Lucy Hanks' husband married her in Virginia for one reason only, as is common today, to give their unborn child a father's name. He probably never came to Kentucky at any time of his life. He was undoubtedly dead when his father Joseph Hanks made his will in January, 1793, for he was not mentioned in it, as we have said before.

Here it might be said that Dennis and John Hanks, both Nancy's cousins, always contended that Nancy's father was a Sparrow; that to call her Hanks made her base born, which they also contended she was not. Any statement from either one of these men, or both of them together concerning happenings before they were born could, in our opinion, be given but little weight. Neither Dennis nor John have displayed any great intelligence in any of their interviews; besides, Dennis Hanks was born when Nancy, his cousin, was fifteen or sixteen years of age, and John was seventeen years younger than Nancy.

When they became old enough to understand all the happenings which we have just related about Nancy and her mother, the circumstances had grown old in their respective homes, for they were then twenty or more years in the past. Neither of them could possibly have known Nancy Hanks except as the wife of Thomas Lincoln. Nancy's mother was still living, but her name from their earliest recollection had been Sparrow, and they grew to manhood in that belief.

Not until Abraham Lincoln became President were they ever called upon to recite the hap-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

penings which had taken place before they were born. Naturally a little dull, and a period of seventy or seventy-five years intervening back to the childhood of Nancy Hanks, with all their relatives dead who once knew all the facts, they found themselves smothered in their own ignorance; and, in the case of Dennis, contradictory and unbelieved.

Before dismissing this phase of the Lincoln family lore we wish to quote from an old resident from Washington County, Squire Mitchell Thompson, who was a grandson of Naomi Shipley Mitchell, another sister of Lucy Shipley Hanks. In 1895 he said: "In the Richard and Rachel Shipley Berry home, room was made for Lucy Hanks --she married a man whose name she took while in Virginia and Nancy Hanks the mother of President Lincoln was the offspring."

There seems nothing in this quotation that is inconsistent with our views as stated above, with the possible exception that Lucy and her babe may have made their home with her brother-in-law, Richard Berry, for a while before taking up a home in Harrodsburg, on her arrival from Virginia, which certainly would be a natural thing to do.

At this period in the narrative of the Lincoln family it seems proper to call attention to the fact that these members of the family, their relatives and their friends are the characters and actors who played in the great drama which is now the background from which came the greatest man of our time; a background attacked after this great man's assassination by a vile, cold-blooded, uncharitable mob of biographers with baseless accusations, vilifications and

LINCOLN'S MOTHER

scandal with no better excuse--to be charitable in the extreme--than jealousy and ignorance: jealous of his magnificent simple greatness, and ignorant of the character of the defenseless family they sought to degrade for the Satanic satisfaction it seemed to bring to them.

Chapter Three

THE CHARGE AGAINST LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

Not only should the characters we have mentioned be appraised, but the central figure in the pages following should be closely scrutinized for one single justifiable accusation coming from this mob of character detractors which will be charged against the authors later. This new central figure is Thomas Lincoln.

Weighing all the evidence in the scales of reason, we believe that the version of the Washington County authorities is more likely to be correct than any other extant when we consider the early ancestors of Abraham Lincoln, for the very good reason that the basis for their belief is substantiated by records found in the courthouse in Springfield. It is said and not disputed, to our knowledge, that Lincoln died believing that the record of his father and mother's marriage license should be found in Hardin, later Larue County, Kentucky. He actually wrote there for them, but was disappointed and thereby believed that none existed.

It is difficult to understand why Lincoln knew no more of the early life of his parents and ancestors than appears from the many contradictory statements and claims of his biographers. Strange that in his constant companionship with his father at home until he became of

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

age he failed to learn that his father and mother lived their early lives in Washington County, and not in Hardin or Larue as later found records prove. Strange that his own mother and her own first cousins, John and Dennis Hanks, her Uncle, Levi Hall by marriage to her Aunt Nancy, the Sparrows, Thomas and Elizabeth, and his affectionate step-mother, Sarah Bush Johnson, all born in Kentucky and all having knowledge of his relatives five to twenty-five years before his birth should leave him sadly ignorant of the legitimate marriage of his father and mother on June 12, 1806; ignorant of the fact that his mother's cousin, Richard Berry, Jr. had been her guardian and had signed her marriage bond; ignorant of the fact that a respected Methodist minister, Jesse Head, had performed the marriage in the home of another cousin, Frank Berry, where she had lived for some years; and ignorant of the fact that all this was and is recorded in the archives of the Washington County Clerk's office in Springfield, Kentucky.

Lincoln was a great and able lawyer from 1837 to the time of his death in 1865, perfectly able to take depositions from any one possessing a knowledge of facts on any accusation or charge, and such depositions would have gone a long way toward settling much if not all baseless imputations of scandal which seemed to bear him down and sadden his life.

Thomas Lincoln, his father, lived until 1851. At that time Lincoln had been riding the circuit for fourteen years, and Charleston, Illinois, was one of the cities on his circuit. Thomas Lincoln's home was eight miles from

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Charleston and Lincoln, the Lawyer, made many trips to see his father and step-mother during those years. Can it be imagined that his father, having no reason for shame would hesitate to inform his own son that his was a legal marriage, giving bondsmen, the date, the place, the name of the minister, and above all, the county in which it occurred in Kentucky?

It may be contended that not until Lincoln became President in 1860 did public clamor demand the unknown facts surrounding himself and family, even though he had become prominent in his own state before it was too late to get unimpeachable evidence. Having been elected to the Legislature four different times in Illinois, and once to the Congress in 1848 may not have been sufficient reason to arouse the public curiosity which came with the national election in 1860 when intense interest supported by personal hatred spawned by the slavery question brought on an avalanche of scandalous accusations which were too much to combat. It is quite understandable when we realize that the entire South and all Lincoln's enemies in the North after his election would gladly promote exaggerated personal attacks on his own character and those of his ancestors, but the strangeness begins when we find no statements or denials supported by depositions from friends who should then have known the facts which have since been discovered in the records that would have set some, if not all, these scandalous detractions at rest.

Dennis Hanks, born in 1799, was seven years old when Thomas Lincoln was married to Nancy Hanks and it is hard to believe he was ignorant

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

of the county in Kentucky in which they were married. He lived through it all and no doubt lived until 1893 with the very best opportunity to clear them up by merely indicating where the facts existed. He was the most intimate relative of Lincoln until the latter was twenty-one or twenty-two years old. Could it be that Lincoln himself half believed that his father and mother were never legally married, and that Dennis Hanks was content to let the scandal stand?

We have a page of a letter written by a relative of Dennis Hanks, dated January 17, 1930, from Janesville, Illinois, a grandniece of Dennis Hanks. The letter gives some light on the character of Hanks, but we quote it in full because, in the light of the above unanswered questions, there are a few lines which may be significant.

"Dennis F. Hanks, one of the well known and familiar names of Coles County, is noted like many other men are and have been on account of his connections with the noblest character of his generation, Abraham Lincoln. The two passed their boyhood together, sleeping in the same bed and engaging in the same labors and sport. One arose from the humble position in which they both lived to the most exalted station in the nation, while the other grew up only to be a respected farmer in the community in which he has lived for half a century, and to admire his companion and to know that any trust reposed in him would never be betrayed (the Hanks and Lincolns were considerably mixed up in their family relations). They came from Indiana together, lived in the same house and Dennis Hanks

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

married the daughter, Sally Johnston, of the second wife of Thomas Lincoln. Dennis Hanks was born in Kentucky and lived prior to his removal to Indiana in Hardin County, Kentucky. In speaking of his removal to the latter named state, he says, at that time Indiana was a desperately sickly place. Miasma poisoned the atmosphere. There was no doctor near. We were there in the year 1825 when Jackson and Adams ran for President. I was then but nineteen years of age, yet I acted as clerk of election and actually voted for Jackson therefore I have voted for him three times."

To say nothing of Dennis's boastful admission of violation of the election laws, we refer to the writer's words more particularly--"and to admire his companion and to know that any trust reposed in him would never be betrayed," etc. Then followed, "the Hanks and Lincolns were considerably mixed up" seems to signify a skeleton somewhere that Dennis did not wish disturbed. The Washington County records are now indisputable proof that Lincoln's father and mother were truly married according to law; it doesn't seem now, although at one time it probably was believed, that the Lincolns and Hankses were badly mixed. There is now absolutely no proof of any "illegitimate mixup" in the Lincoln and Hanks families. There is proof that Dennis Hanks was an illegitimate child of Nancy Hanks, and was given the middle name "Friend" which was the surname of his father. His mother afterward married Levi Hall, whom we have before mentioned.

In the light of now known records which have cleared many of the former misconceptions of

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

the ancestors of the Lincoln family, the impression grows continually stronger, when we judge the character of Dennis Hanks by his letters, interviews, and family traditions that he, because of selfish jealousy and envy--born of his own conscious inferiority to Lincoln, a mysterious man who grew up beside him--was the star witness in the great fabrication of dark insinuations leveled against the Lincoln background. Conscious of his own origin, he knew no better than to believe he could weave himself a halo by darkening the glow of others. Therefore, when defamatory charges were directed toward the Lincolns, he rejoiced rather than lamented the fact. Though an ignorant and unaccountable miscreant he was innocent compared to the biographers who came along and took up his evidence as though it were unimpeachable.

In spite of the small praise given Dennis Hanks by the author of the above quoted letter, he fails to merit it by some authorities. He is rated as a liar by some and even a thief if the story told us by his own grandniece, Mrs. Nancy A. Hall Thomas is true. Her testimony is: "Uncle Dennis stayed at our house lots before he died, and I had to wait on him. He'd lay in bed till nearly dinnertime, then he'd get up and set around and let pap do all the work, then he'd search around in the drawers for letters of Lincoln's that grandmother Lincoln had saved and he'd take 'em to Chicago and sell 'em to Herndon. He was lazy and liked to dress up and act big. We didn't have no screens then, and Uncle Dennis would fix two little boards, one for each hand, then he'd put sugar on them

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

to bait flies and set in the kitchen and catch and kill them."

After Dennis Hanks' own grandniece gave us her estimate of her Uncle Dennis as a purloiner of letters, "lazy and liked to dress up and act big" we began to realize that she was not the only member of the Hanks family who had very similar views. There were older nephews who had lived all their lives in close relationship with him. Two of these living witnesses were Nancy's father and uncle, John J. and William Hall. We quote a conversation between these two brothers from Mrs. Gridley's book, (p. 167), which leads up to their estimation of their Uncle Dennis: "Immediately, Uncle John Hall, in order to illustrate the habit 'fur thinking' that Mr. Lincoln possessed, told the following little incident: 'Twas during the summer of 1846 or '47' said Mr. Hall, 'that Uncle Abe come up to the old log cabin and stayed almost a month, 'twas two weeks anyhow, and the reason he stayed so long was because he wanted to study something out about law. Uncle Abe had walked all the way from Springfield, about a hundred miles, and seemed kinder tired fur the first two or three days, and so he said, "I'll just lay around and think." Wall the days went along and Uncle Abe kept doin' jest the same kind of studying, a laying and a thinking, till after a while he said, "I've done enough studying and I reckon I'd better go back to Mary."

"Uncle John Hall now addressed his brother and said to him: 'Don't ye remember we hev talked to Uncle Dennis Hanks sence Uncle Abe's death about his doin' his studyin' in sech

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

a curous way, and Uncle Dennis said "it wus more laziness than studyin' or thinkin' either."

"Wondering why Dennis Hanks should speak so disparagingly of Mr. Lincoln I asked for the reason. It was a mystery to both of the brothers, who declared that Uncle Abe had always been extremely cordial to his cousin, but agreed that there was one thing that Uncle Abe had not done for his relative, and that was, he had failed to bestow upon Uncle Dennis an official position.

"We fell into a speculative turn of thought, and tried to make up our minds what position Dennis Hanks would have asked for. Uncle John Hall settled the matter by saying that 'Uncle Dennis and Uncle Abe both had the Hanks ambition, and that nothin' wouldhev suited either of them but the Presidency of the United States.' Therefore, we all concluded that it was genuine jealousy and envy that possessed the soul of Dennis Hanks."

This seems a fair estimate of the character of Dennis Hanks by those who ought to know him best; and can be summed up by the words, "ignorant," "disappointed," "envious," "proud," "egotistic," "self important," "a liar" by Herndon, and "a thief" by Nancy A. Hall. And he is the illustrious star witness most quoted by biographers who have so glibly painted the dark background for Lincoln, the Immortal.

When Lincoln became President of the United States an avalanche of questions sprang up overnight. They circled over the heads of the people for a place to light. Dennis Hanks soon was singled out as the king bee. He was illiterate and unprepared for such distinction. He

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

was about sixty years old and his memory was the only authority he could quote from. Questions became spicy and embarrassing, but he was proud and loved the new limelight. He became envious of Lincoln and said the wrong thing at times for the purpose of converging more of his greatness to himself. When he was asked how he was related to Lincoln and who his own father and mother were, his answers were contradictory. His contradictions soon branded him a liar, so he floundered along to the end of his days as a discredited old man, envious to the last of his great and kind cousin, Lincoln. Had he always told the truth to the best of his ability and actual knowledge, his name would have passed into history with love and respect. But his infamy hurt only himself, it was the unjustifiable importance given to his feeble evidence by biographers who made use of it for sinister purposes afterward which produced the irreparable slander to the innocent dead.

Returning to the Lincoln neighborhood in Washington County, Kentucky, we find the following as local history: "Nancy continued to live in the Berry home until after the deaths of her uncle and aunt, the latter dying in 1804. Then she went to live with her cousin, Francis Berry, in a large two-story log house which stood on a knoll overlooking the Little Beech, about a quarter of a mile north of the little hamlet of Poortown. There, on June 12, 1806, she and Thomas Lincoln were married. By that time, Thomas Lincoln's sisters, Mary and Ann, had married and moved to Hardin County. Their mother had gone to make her home in the same

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

neighborhood, living in a cabin which Thomas built for her.

The latter part of the above paragraph will be important to remember, when, as will follow later, Washington County claims will be presented to at least question the claims as to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln which now go to Larue County, near Hodgenville. Also it may be well to say at this time that Thomas's sister Mary is the one who married Ralph Crume, and is the brother-in-law who helped when he furnished the horses to move Lincoln to Indiana in 1816, and possibly when Lincoln moved the goods belonging to his wife, Sarah Bush Johnston, in 1819.

Some confusion has been caused in the minds of the people in relation of the Lincolns and Berrys to Washington County by the change at times in the boundaries. To understand this better we quote a letter in full which we have received from Mr. Polin, in Springfield. The letter is dated September 8, 1942, and says: "In October, 1776, the Legislature of Virginia created the county of Kentucky, which embraced all of the eastern and central portion of the state of Kentucky. In May, 1780, Kentucky was divided into three counties: Jefferson, Lincoln, and Fayette. Jefferson included what is now Washington County. In October, 1784, the Legislature of Virginia divided Jefferson into two counties, Jefferson and Nelson. Shortly after Kentucky became a state, the Legislature divided Nelson into Nelson and Washington Counties. For this historical data, I refer you to Volume I, page 626 of Little's Laws of Kentucky. This volume is rare, but can be located."

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Mr. Polin adds the following as proof that the elder Abraham Lincoln was a resident of Washington County at the time he was killed by the Indians. He says: "In Bardstown, in Nelson County, Kentucky, the record of the year 1789, is the appraisement of the property of Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the President. The appraisers were, Peter Sibert, Christopher Barlow, and John Alvey. All of these men were land owners in the vicinity of the Lincoln Park on the site of the pioneer home. This evidence proves the President's grandfather was killed in Washington County, Kentucky. I heard my father and other elderly residents of this county speak of seeing the powder horn, with the name of A. Lincoln upon it which was said to have been suspended around the neck of Abraham Lincoln when he was killed by the Indians. This powder horn was loaned to the Louisville Polytechnic Association, and we are unable to locate it at the present time."

In answer to a question Mr. Polin states that there is no record of Dennis Hanks in Washington County, but thinks probably there is in the adjoining county of Nelson. We made the statement earlier in this writing that the family of Joseph Hanks settled in Nelson County, and John Hanks, in a statement of Herndon in 1865 says he "was born about twelve miles of Bardstown," which indicates that Joseph, Jr.--John's father--was still in that county in 1801 when John was born, which would have been about eight years after the elder Joseph Hanks died. Dennis was born in May of 1799. If Mr. Polin is correct in his belief that there is a record of Dennis in Nelson County, it is possible Den-

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

nis is mistaken in the place of his birth, as his mother, Nancy Hanks, a sister of John's father, was still unmarried and living in somebody's home when Dennis was born. Dennis claimed he was born a short distance from the Thomas Lincoln home.

To confirm our earlier statement that Lucy Shipley was a sister to Thomas Lincoln's mother, which made Thomas an own cousin to his wife Nancy Hanks, we quote Mr. Polin again: "Nancy Hank's mother was a Shipley, her sister, Rachel, married the elder Richard Berry (the pioneer). Nancy lived with her aunt Rachel Berry until the death of Richard and Rachel. They were buried in the garden, where the large house is, on the pike, and which you saw when you were here." Somewhere we have read that Thomas Lincoln's mother, a Shipley, died when he was born. In which case, if it be true, Abraham Lincoln, Sr. migrated from Virginia with his second wife, known as Bersheba Lincoln; her maiden name is not known to us. She could only have been Thomas Lincoln's step-mother.

And now, in support of our own last statement, which we have made with a little reserve, we wish to copy in full a paragraph from page 123 in EARLY TIMES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, KENTUCKY, written by Orvil W. Baylor, first printing in June, 1942. In speaking of "The original Lincoln family" he says: "The first wife of Abraham Lincoln, Sr., was Mary Shipley, a daughter of Robert Shipley, Jr., of Virginia. They were married in 1770. She died in 1776, when Thomas Lincoln, father of President Lincoln was born. She was a sister of Rachel Shipley, who married Richard Berry, Sr.; Ann Shipley, who

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

married David McCord; Naoma Shipley, who married Robert Mitchel; and Lucy Shipley, who married James Hanks, and became the mother of Nancy Hanks, the mother of President Lincoln."

Just how Mr. Baylor obtained his facts for these statements, he does not say, but since he seems to be our latest informer, and nothing he has said seems inconsistent as to dates of emigrations, or marriages, especially the marriage of Lucy Shipley, the President's grandmother to a Hanks, we are pleased to accept what he says as true.

Mr. Baylor in speaking of the Lincoln emigration into Kentucky in 1782 gives the names of the members of the senior Lincoln's family as follows: Abraham the father; Bersheba the mother, whom he married in 1779, his second wife; three sons, Mordicai, Josiah, and Thomas; and two daughters, Mary and Ann. All of these children were from Mary Shipley Lincoln, except Ann, who was the daughter of Bersheba (?) Lincoln, and only a half-sister to the older children.

In defense of the Lincolns we take these items from Mr. Baylor's book which we feel should be better known by all who believe in fair play: Abraham, Sr. served as captain of a militia company in Rockingham County. He also served as Judge advocate of the Rockingham County Court from 1776 to 1778. In 1780, he entered 800 acres of land on Green River Lick; also 400 acres on Floyd's Fork in Jefferson County, Kentucky. In 1781, he visited Kentucky, and in August, 1782, while he was on his way back to Virginia to move his family to Kentucky, he was captured by the Indians near Danville.

LUCY (SHIPLEY) HANKS

He was made to run the gauntlet, and then released. Thomas Lincoln certainly inherited nothing from his own background which would have a tendency to reduce him to "lower than the white trash."

Had some of our envious biographers of Lincoln been a little more cautious about the genuineness of their material used in vilifications of the ancestors of Lincoln, and had been content to wait for authentic verification of facts as are gradually coming to light, half the books on Lincoln's life would probably not have been written, and half the pages in the other half would have been blank. As, for instance, half the wind was taken out of their sails when the record of Thomas Lincoln's marriage license was discovered in the files in Washington County seventeen years after Abraham Lincoln's death. Can any one guess with any degree of accuracy of the thousands of pages of ugly defamatory allegations written, charged against President Lincoln's father and mother, not because their marriage license was not in existence, but simply because it was not found? Seventeen years certainly produced thousands of pages, and the momentum gained in that period of time has carried the baseless villainy far beyond four times that.

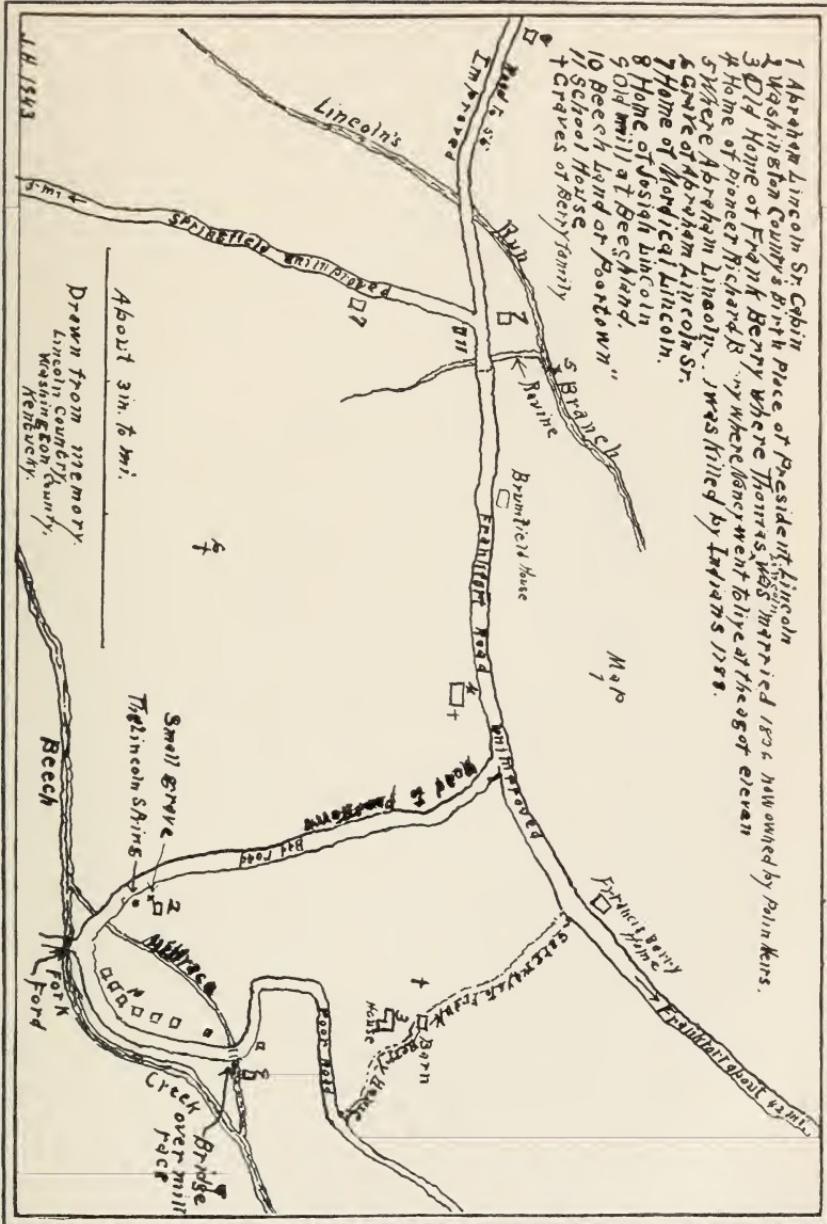
Chapter Four

THE BIRTHPLACE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The original pioneer home of the Lincolns seems now to be well established as in Washington County by the subdivisions of Jefferson County into Jefferson and Nelson, and finally Nelson into Nelson and Washington. Biographers first had the Lincolns in Jefferson, then in Nelson and finally in Washington. The fact was, according to Mr. Polin's explanation, the county lines did the moving, and not the Lincolns.

Not quarreling with either Washington or Larue counties as to their respective rights to the honor of being the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, it seems that the possessor in this case should be entitled to the advantage of the rule of nine points at law, if, and when the question comes up again for final settlement. To be an unbiased inquisitor one would have to say at the start that both counties were in possession of very old log cabins very much alike and similar to those inhabited by early, pioneers, each of which had springs near them. In that respect, points are evenly balanced.

Both cabins have been removed from their original sites: the cabin in Washington County still remaining at Harrodsburg and now exhibited as the Lincoln Marriage Shrine, while the cabin in Larue County, after much ado was brought



LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

back to its former location for a last resting place. As to authenticity of age and the original builders of the cabins it appears that the claims of authorities in Washington County have a much more substantial basis than those of Larue County, even though the latter retains possession of the national Memorial Monument.

While the history of both cabins is more or less traditional, certainly that in Larue County is far more vague. It would appear that the most reliable information regarding the history of the cabin in the National Memorial Building would be found in the Abraham Lincoln National Park folder, from which we take the following:

"From 1861 to the present time the history of the log cabin which is now displayed within the Memorial Building is fairly clear. Its history prior to 1861 is a matter of controversy and doubt." "Nor is there conclusive evidence concerning the specific location of the original cabin."

In Washington County the history of the Lincoln Birthplace Cabin is not questioned either in records or tradition. In fact, its whole history is told and regarded by citizens of that county as a well established fact. We may cite here the fact that when Mercer County obtained the cabin for exposition as the Lincoln Marriage Shrine they certainly subscribed to all the facts claimed for it. As will be remembered, in the earlier part of these writings we gave the early history of the cabin as being built by the pioneer Richard Berry, Sr. with the assistance of Abraham Lincoln, Sr. and his three boys, Mordicai, Josiah, and Thomas on their arrival from Virginia in 1782.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

We should say here that the Washington County claimants for the lost honor of the birthplace of Lincoln should be credited by rights with at least some assistance in establishing the time of construction of the Larue County cabin.

The following is from a booklet entitled, "Lincoln Parents Home County," and reads: "After the birth of Abraham Lincoln in 1809, Thomas Lincoln left his family in the care of their neighbors in the Original Lincoln Country while he went to build a home in Hardin County, on Nolin Creek. After an absence of several months he returned and took his family to the new home."

This Washington County information, if acceptable to Larue County historians, might be of some importance in establishing the age of the Lincoln Memorial Cabin, providing they can agree that Thomas Lincoln built it "after Abraham Lincoln's birth in 1809."

In this effort IN DEFENSE OF THE LINCOLN FAMILY against its many traducers of character from biographers it should make but little difference in which county in Kentucky Abraham Lincoln was born, or what particular log cabin might have been his place of birth; but, if we can present some of the arguments advanced by the two counties in support of their respective claims for the honor, we are sure the effort will be worth while for: since it was in Kentucky that the many dark and shady rumors emerged with which so many writers seemed so eager to stain the character of Thomas Lincoln, and to bring the cabin controversies into the discussion, Thomas Lincoln's activities will

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

have to be followed. Doing this we learn the character of his occupation, which is important.

A preview of some of Thomas Lincoln's activities while he remained in Kentucky may not be amiss:

Born in Virginia in 1776.

His father killed in Washington County, Kentucky, 1786.

Grew up in Lincoln Run cabin until 1795.

Record shows he joined the militia, 1795.

1796, worked on a mill site in Hardin County, 3 shillings per day.

1798-9, worked on his uncle Isaac's farm in Tennessee, and it is believed he made a trip to Missouri with Daniel Boone.

1801, entered land in Cumberland County, Kentucky, and in 1802 was appointed constable in that county; also listed for taxes in Washington County the same year.

1803, bought 238 acres on Mill Creek, Hardin County, for 118 pounds cash. Had learned the carpenter trade in 1797 and built a cabin on this farm and brought his step-mother and half-sister Ann to this farm.

1804, petitioned for a road to be built by his farm on Mill Creek.

1805, patrol policeman, guarding against runaway slaves.

1806, married to Nancy Hanks, June 12, near Poortown, Washington County, at home of Francis Berry, her cousin.

1807, Sarah Lincoln born. Bible record.

1807, built saw mill in Elizabethtown, compelled to bring suit for collection of wages.

1808, bought 348½ acres on Nolin Creek.

1809, Abraham Lincoln born.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

1810, paid taxes in Washington County. Name of Thomas Lincoln, wife, one son Abraham, one daughter Sarah appeared on United State Census. Census record in Hardin County.

Systematic research by this time has brought the activities of Thomas Lincoln's life while he lived in Kentucky to almost diary certainty. In the "Lincoln Kinsman" No. 9, of March, 1939, as many as 175 items of interest concerning his moves, land purchases, appointments, jury service, etc., ranging from the purchase of 2 and 300 acre farms to a twist of tobacco or a skein of thread. For instance, on June 12, he was married to Nancy Hanks at Beechland, Washington County. On June 14, he was back in Elizabethtown and bought a half set of knives and forks at five shillings and three skeins of silk for which he paid three pence. This was at Blakeley and Montgomery's store. On March 25, 1807, Lincoln brought suit against Denton Geoghegan for collection on contract price on hewing. On April 23, of the same year Lincoln was accorded judgment in Geoghegan suit for four pounds, nine shillings debt, and seventy-five cents cost. But, not to withhold a tip to his enemy biographers, we must admit that on October 21, 1806, only four months after he had become a married man, he purchased a combination of needles and whiskey which totaled one shilling and one-half pence, and a quarter bushel of salt at four shillings and six pence. Had this item of whiskey been known to some of Thomas Lincoln's biographers fifty or sixty years afterward, no doubt he would now be lying under an additional charge of inebriety.

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

The following dated items are from the "Lincoln Kinsman" mentioned above:

1811, found a stray horse on Knob Creek and advertised it. Served on a jury in Handley versus Stewart case at Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

1812, served on jury in Kirkpatrick versus Cesance case in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Third son, Thomas, born some time this year.

1813, Mather brought suit against Lincoln for title to South Fork farm. Lincoln filed answer in six days. Thomas Lincoln, special bail for Cosbie Scott sued for debt, delivers Scott to the court.

1814, called for Mill Creek deed at Hardin County Courthouse. Appointed an appraiser for Jonathan Joseph estate. Bought a child's play wagon at a sale for eight and a quarter cents. Signed an amended answer in Mather's suit. Bought a heifer for nine dollars and forty-two cents and a curry comb for sixty-three cents. Joins with wife in sale of Mill Creek farm to Charles Melton for consideration of one hundred pounds in hand paid.

1815, entered two hundred thirty acres of land on Knob Creek and four horses for taxation.

1816, signs as a bondsman on marriage bond of Caleb Hazel and Mary Stevens.

1816, filed bill against Isaac Bush in attempt to collect two hundred dollars due court order and paid attorney three dollars and a half to be given printer for publishing notices. Entered four horses for taxation. Moved from Knob Creek farm in Kentucky to new home in Indiana.

Whatever we might make from the above dated and authentic records, which are only a few of

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

all the known activities of Thomas Lincoln while he lived in Kentucky; moving to Indiana at about the age of forty, it does not seem that he could be justly accused of being "inactive," "shiftless" or "lazy." And, too, isn't it a little remarkable that in all this data, when we remember the dark cloud spread over his Kentucky life by the biographers of his illustrious son in years after, that not one charge of a criminal nature has yet been found; not an arrest for drunkenness, debt, swindling or fighting? What is the answer to that?

We have spoken of the contention of Washington County for the honor of being the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. Considering the firm belief of the public that Lincoln's birthplace is established in Larue County near Hodgenville, as evidenced by the great Memorial built by contributions and now Government managed, we are confident no overnight action will ever be taken to relocate the birthplace to Washington County, or any other county in Kentucky--without a lot of proof now unknown. But, suppose it was discovered, as the marriage license of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks was discovered (without the discovery of that marriage license Larue County would now be claiming the marriage of Thomas Lincoln as having taken place in Elizabethtown as once believed as firmly as it believes now that Lincoln was born there).

In the "Lincoln Kinsman" referred to above there is one item it quotes, which, if true as stated would settle the birthplace question beyond a reasonable doubt in favor of its present place, barring the possibility of the discovery

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

of a birth record in Washington County for the birth of Lincoln.

The item comes under the year of 1807, and reads: "February 10th., Sarah Lincoln was born at Elizabethtown, the first child of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln." That would seem to establish the home of Thomas Lincoln in Elizabethtown on that date, and if Abraham Lincoln was really born in Washington County near Poortown, Thomas would have had to move some time between February 10, 1807, and February 12, 1809, back to that place. So, if we take sides with Washington County, we must say we have our doubts that Thomas Lincoln ever lived in Elizabethtown after he was married in 1806, and did not move from Poortown to Hardin County until about 1810.

Washington County authorities say that Thomas Lincoln paid taxes in that county in 1810. To our knowledge he never owned real estate in Washington County; so, if there is a tax record there, he surely was paying on personal property, which certainly would be household goods. How do Hardin County claimants account for Thomas Lincoln's taxes due in Washington County the year after Abraham Lincoln was born than by tax on personal property: a cow, hogs, chickens and a few house goods?

But Hardin County says that Thomas Lincoln was in Elizabethtown two days after he was married and bought some knives and forks and three skeins of silk. Washington County admits that Thomas Lincoln continued to go back and forth to work after he was married just as he had been doing before. His work had been at and about Elizabethtown most of the time after returning from his Uncle Isaac's farm in Tennessee.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

This going back and forth to work from his home in Beechland to Elizabethtown continued, according to Washington County Lincoln lore until some months after the son Abraham was born.

Apparently, Thomas Lincoln was a regular customer at the Blakely and Montgomery store in Elizabethtown, beginning in July, 1804, and lasting until some time in 1808. No purchases were made after May 13, 1808. If Thomas Lincoln was living in Hardin County why did he not continue trading in Elizabethtown as he had been doing? And why, if he was a resident there from the time he was married did not his wife's name, Nancy, appear on the store ledger on Thomas Lincoln's account? A few others bought on his account, but Nancy's name is not to be found on it. Was it because she was at home in Beechland, Washington County? Surely in two or three years residence close to Blakely and Montgomery she would need something when her husband was away--if her home was in Elizabethtown. An item of May 24, 1806, says that Mrs. Ogden, wife of Benjamin Ogden, the Methodist preacher, secured some silk at Blakely and Montgomery store by order of Thomas Lincoln and paid twelve shillings for it. An item, August 6, 1806, notes that Richard Brumfield, secured goods to the amount of one pound, four shillings, which were charged to Thomas Lincoln's account. Nancy's name never appears either by order or in person.

The "Lincoln Kinsman" says that on February 10, 1807, Sarah Lincoln was born in Elizabethtown (seven months and twenty-six days after Thomas and Nancy were married). Is it likely that Thomas would care to bring his new wife to

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

a new home in Elizabethtown under the circumstances existing so soon as two days after their marriage? Would Nancy wish to hurry to a new home among strangers or prefer to stay awhile among her friends and relatives?

Thomas bought sundries at Blakely and Montgomery store twenty days before Sarah Lincoln was born, and did not appear at the store again for twenty-seven days after she was born. Where was he? If Sarah was born in Elizabethtown, wouldn't that have been a time for almost daily trips to the store? Surely there must have been something at the Blakely and Montgomery store at that important time that Thomas Lincoln should need; he was still trading there and continued doing so for more than a year afterward. Could it be that Thomas was at that time more than forty miles from Elizabethtown at his home in the Beechland neighborhood close to Nancy's folks, the Berrys? Traditions in Washington County say he was. Deductions substantiate them.

Blakely and Montgomery charged nothing to Thomas Lincoln's account for twenty-seven days after Sarah's birth; not a yard of cloth, not a bit of tea, not a pound of coffee or sugar. His absence from his favorite store at this particular and important time certainly speaks volumes for Washington County's argument that Lincoln continued to live in the cabin near Beechland after his marriage to Nancy Hanks.

We have found that Thomas Lincoln had charged to his account as many as eighty-eight different items or purchases during the time he traded at the Blakely and Montgomery store in Elizabethtown. Not a single article was furni-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ture for setting up housekeeping. No beds, no chairs, no tables, bureaus or clocks, blankets or bed clothing, and, what would be most significant, not a pound of anything to eat. No bacon, sugar, coffee, tea, molasses, hominy or rice; nothing in the grocery line whatever, not even crackers or cheese. Some of the articles he did buy indicated it was a general store. Tobacco was often an item of purchase; calomel, jalap, and salt, which indicated groceries were in the store.

Once he bought a quarter bushel of salt, no doubt for his horse; which, of course, he kept with him for his weekly and sometimes monthly trips back to his home in Washington County. The salt possibly weighed as much as fifteen pounds, which, judging by the items on the ledger was the weightiest article he ever purchased, indicating that nothing too heavy or too bulky to carry on horseback was ever purchased in Elizabethtown. If the salt was for his horse it probably remained in Elizabethtown for his use there.

Before leaving this interesting list of side lights as they appear on the ledger of the old Blakeley and Montgomery store which the "Lincoln Kinsman" has given to the public, we wish to call attention to two items appearing on the book a few days before Thomas Lincoln was married. On June 2, 1806, Thomas purchased a "tipt" bridle for his horse and paid thirteen shillings and six pence for it. Then, on June 4, 1806, he purchased for Mrs. Sarah Bush Johnston, his future second wife, items to the amount of seven shillings and six pence. The bridle was bought ten days before he was mar-

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

ried; and, as it was "tipt" we suppose it was a little unusually decorated for Nancy's pleasure as he headed his horse through the gate and up to the stile in front of the two-story log mansion of Frank Berry's to meet the girl of his choice, Nancy Hanks.

Thomas Lincoln had made a trip to New Orleans, starting about the first few days of March with Isaac Bush, a brother to Sarah Bush (Thomas' second wife). This was for Blakely and Montgomery and when they returned Sarah Bush had become the wife of Daniel Johnston. Presumably, the above charge to Thomas Lincoln's account is for a present to her from Lincoln. Thirteen years afterward Mrs. Sarah Bush Johnston became the wife of Thomas Lincoln.

Now, if Washington County is correct as to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, and, of course, his sister Sarah, as the deductions from the old ledger tend to prove; what year is Washington County willing to admit that Thomas Lincoln did move to Hardin County and take his family to live? There are two fairly good reasons to believe that it was sometime in the year of 1810, and that it was most likely in the spring of that year, not later than the first of June. According to records of the "Lincoln Kinsman" we find: that Thomas Lincoln entered two hundred acres of land on Mill Creek and two horses for taxation that year; and that the name of Thomas Lincoln appeared on the United States Census for Hardin County as a male between twenty-six and forty-five, a boy (Abraham) under ten and a girl (Sarah)under ten. Census-taking by the Government begins the first of June, so we believe that Washington County would not

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

contend that Thomas Lincoln and his family were not settled in Hardin County by that date. In this conclusion it should not be forgotten that Washington County tells us that Thomas Lincoln paid taxes in that county in 1810 also. Since he was never known to own real estate there, the taxes must have been levied on personal property, as before stated.

But there is a traditional claim, although not important so far as establishing the true birthplace of Lincoln, made by Washington County claimants which would require the setting back of the birth of the Baby Thomas Lincoln, as it also would Sarah and Abraham about two years. In the "Lincoln Kinsman" we find that the date of this child's birth is in 1812, about two years after Thomas moved from Washington County to Hardin, if we take the former county's view. The "Lincoln Kinsman" fails to give the day or month of this baby's birth, or where his grave is located. Washington County tradition locates the grave and approximates the year of birth as about 1810, as we will try to explain later.

Chapter Five

THE BIRTHPLACE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CONTINUED)

Staying overnight in Springfield the writer had occasion to meet and talk to a lady living there, Mrs. Dr. Mudd, who, in early life lived north of town in the Lincoln-Berry neighborhood. She stated, in our conversation relating to Lincoln's birthplace, that from her earliest recollection the old log cabin which stood near Poortown and later torn down and taken to Harrodsburg was always known and pointed out to her as the birthplace of President Lincoln. She further stated that it was common knowledge in that locality as to the relationship of Nancy Hanks to the Berrys and the two homes they had given her before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln. Even the records found in the Springfield courthouse substantiating the facts were no more convincing to her than the traditional stories handed down through the families to the present time.

Asked to account for the great Memorial Building at the alleged site of Lincoln's birthplace at Hodgenville, she gave the same answer that Mr. Polin and Mr. Pinkston gave: that the Washington County people were surprised and caught napping, never dreaming any other county in Kentucky had any right to claim the honor now lost to them. But we have a faint idea that Mr.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Pinkston stated the facts more correctly when he said in regard to their "lost honor," that the authorities in Washington County saw no honor lost until it began to come to Larue County; then it was too late.

In our opinion, regardless of blame or on whom it may rest, should the public (the national public) become convinced that a great error had been made when the Memorial to the birthplace of Lincoln was located in Larue County, there would be no public rest until it was relocated by the little pioneer village of Poortown, Washington County, Kentucky. As it is, in the light of discoveries constantly being made regarding Lincoln's ancestors in Kentucky and the certain growing realization of his immortal greatness in that state, in the nation, and in the world, it is not difficult to visualize a violent tempest of clamorous protests against its present location. The constant sting of unjust loss to Washington County may start the whirlwind that may bring the national storm of protest to the dimensions necessary for its removal to what that county believes is its rightful place. Washington County will win.

In Lincoln's autobiography written in the third person, he said: "Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, then in Hardin, now in the more recently formed county of Larue, Kentucky." On the basis of those two lines taken from Lincoln's own autobiography, no doubt the prized Memorial Building was located in Larue County with but little investigation to verify the truth. If an error was committed, it seems to be a natural one, for most people are

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

presumed to know their birthplace without question.

But, in two places in this same autobiography he was mistaken. And, since he evidently relied on the same source, family tradition in making the errors, his statement in which he gave his place of birth is weakened in consequence. He also makes the statement that "The family were originally Quakers." A footnote at the bottom of the page says: "In this he was mistaken." On the same page Lincoln says in speaking of his Uncle Josiah: "He moved to Indiana and settled on Blue River in Hancock County." Had he not been mistaken he would have said, Harrison County, Indiana.

Lincoln historians in Washington County say bluntly that he was mistaken in his belief about his birthplace, as this quotation which follows, verifies: "Abraham Lincoln knew very little about the early life of his parents and less about the history of his forebears. He believed that his mother and father had always lived in Hardin County, Kentucky; that they were married there and that his sister and he were born in Hardin County. Consequently in 1858, when his political enemies were circulating the sordid tale that he was an illegitimate and that his parents had never legally married, Lincoln turned to the archives of Hardin County for a copy of his parents' marriage record. The record of course was not to be found. It was in the archives of near-by Washington County where his parents were raised, where they were married, and where they lived several years after their marriage. But Lincoln knew nothing about all this. He went to his grave sadly disap-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

pointed, it is said, because he had failed to find a record of the marriage of his parents, and believing that they were never legally married."

Since the marriage record of Lincoln's parents was not found until 1882, seventeen years after Lincoln's death, but little of the above contention of Washington County authorities can be disputed. However, because of his close association with older people, his father especially, until he was twenty-one and older, he may have firmly believed that his father and mother were legally married, but was sadly disappointed because his agents failed to find the marriage certificate.

It should be taken into consideration that when Lincoln was still living and instituted the unsuccessful search for such papers in LaRue County, it is doubtful if he could find a single loyal supporter in that whole country with influence enough to be able to make any sort of systematic search for any record that would be to the credit of the President. It should be remembered that Washington County gave Lincoln and Hamlin one single vote in the election in 1860, and only six were cast for them in Hardin County. It is not likely that the one vote or one of the six supporters in the two counties, or even one of the one hundred who afterwards claimed to have cast the "one" vote in Washington County ever dared to seriously look for Thomas Lincoln's marriage record before the President's assassination in 1865.

Since it is an established fact that Lincoln himself did not know the truth about the place

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

of his father's marriage, who, of all the witnesses that might give aid and enlightenment of events which took place in the period of time from the date of Thomas Lincoln's marriage, now definitely known to be June 12, 1806, at the little place of Beechland in Washington County; who, of all who in the past have given testimony, can we trust and expect the truth from that date to the time Thomas Lincoln actually moved into Hardin County? There were three people who grew up with Lincoln from childhood, and all of them were living at the time of Lincoln's assassination; at a time when the absolute truth as they might know it would certainly be told if ever it was, each was interviewed and cross-questioned many times, and after it was all over not one of them seemed to know the facts better than the President himself. Neither of the Hankses, John or Dennis, seemed to have any clear recollection of any happenings back of Lincoln's birth, although both of them were old enough to have knowledge of Thomas Lincoln's marriage. John was five years old, and Dennis seven. Whatever either of them said of events happening in Kentucky can hardly be relied upon as authentic, and their memory seemed to serve them poorly in all their narratives of later years. What biographer today would seriously repeat the story of Dennis Hanks running to see the new baby at Thomas Lincoln's home two miles away ahead of his mother? And if he did, what would be his reason for doing so? Dennis said he himself was born in Hardin County. Would the historian repeat the baby story for the purpose of establishing the place of Abraham Lincoln's birthplace? Would he, if it were left to him,

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

establish a great memorial monument to Lincoln's birthplace on the strength of the Dennis Hank's baby story? If it were true, it would be sufficient for Dennis was old enough to make the run he told about when Lincoln was born. Also, Dennis was old enough to have saved the boy Abraham from drowning as he related. Is that story believed now with any degree of confidence? If we cannot believe these stories, then any other thing he may say about the place of Abraham Lincoln's birth should be placed beside those boastful and innocent little lies.

John Hanks, three years younger than his cousin Dennis, seemed truthful to the best of his ability. He had no ambition to embellish his hazy memory of a fifty-year old period with unreasonable stories for effect. Therefore John Hanks made no effort to say when or where Thomas Lincoln was married or where his children were born. He probably knew actually less than Abraham Lincoln did about events between 1806 and 1810. There was nothing from John to establish Lincoln's birth as taking place in Hardin County.

Sarah Bush Lincoln could have been a good and reliable witness as to Lincoln's birthplace had the question ever occurred to anyone to ask it. As will be recalled, she was a resident of Elizabethtown and had married Daniel Johnston only a few weeks before Thomas Lincoln returned from a trip to New Orleans with a cargo for the Blakely and Montgomery store with her brother Isaac Bush. Thomas had started on the New Orleans trip about the first of March, 1806; Sarah was married in about a week after the start. Thomas Lincoln and her brother returned

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

about the first of May, and immediately Lincoln began to prepare for his own wedding which took place in a little over four weeks--the 12th of June. Both Thomas and her brother gave her wedding presents according to the "Lincoln Kinsman" when they came home and found her married to Johnston. Was the cause of Thomas Lincoln's apparent hurry to get married when he returned from New Orleans the disappointment in finding Sarah Bush already married or a gentle hint from Nancy Hanks over in the old neighborhood at Beechland that a little hurry might be better than a little delay? Whichever it was, if either, there can be no doubt whatever that Sarah Bush Lincoln knew when and where all of Thomas Lincoln's children were born. She lived until 1869. Why, during her long life, did she not tell what she knew? She surely would have been believed. In our opinion, it was because while she lived (possibly up to the time the marriage records were discovered in 1882) the public rested in the belief that the Lincolns had always lived in Hardin County, married there and of course Thomas's children born there as Abraham Lincoln himself thought and said in his autobiography. In that case, no one thought to ask the question. When there was a question all parties were dead who could be believed. Dennis Hanks still lived, but was an incompetent witness. Washington County knew the true history of the Lincolns, the Berrys, Nancy Hanks and her marriage with Thomas Lincoln. The birth of their children was all kept in the archives of family traditions.

It may be asked, what difference does it make where Abraham Lincoln was born? The question

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

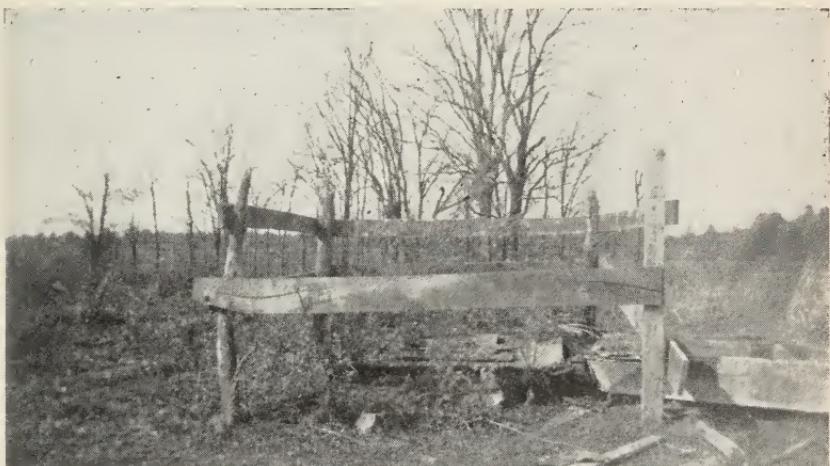
may be answered by asking another: What difference did it make whether his father and mother's marriage license was found or not? Ordinarily, for the public to be ignorant of the birthplace or marriage record of the average individual, would be of little interest. The importance of the fact lies altogether with the importance of the person, and the degree of honor and respect the living may have for the man. As for Lincoln: The importance of his true place of birth is becoming greater as his greatness grows, and in the exact proportion. The importance may be judged by our own individual selves when we realize the satisfaction of viewing the real, rather than the counterfeit.

It is not of recent years that the question between the counties of Washington and Larue over the birthplace of President Lincoln began. Thirteen years before the movement began which led to the erection of the Memorial in Larue County on the Nolin Creek farm, R. M. Thompson, of Springfield, Kentucky, made an affidavit to the effect that all of Thomas Lincoln's children were born in the Beechland cabin. Mr. Thompson was the man who in 1882 caused the search for the marriage license of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks in the archives of the courthouse in Springfield. He was a distant cousin of Nancy Hanks, and resented the insinuations circulating at the time that she and Thomas Lincoln were not legally married.

Thompson was seventy years old in 1882 when the search was instituted, and based his belief altogether on what older people told him who lived contemporaneous with the principals of the time. Two of the men his affidavit refers



Old home of Frank Berry in Washington County, Kentucky, where Nancy Hanks made her home after her aunt died, and where it is now thought she and Thomas Lincoln were married. House was built in 1797.



Well on Josiah Crawford's farm which Lincoln helped dig and wall. Trees on site of old cabin.

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

to were Richard Berry, Jr., and William Hardesty. Berry was the grandson of Francis Berry, Sr., the pioneer. Francis Berry, Sr. and his brother-in-law, Abraham Lincoln, Sr., both married Shipleys (sisters to Lucy Shipley Hanks who was the mother of Nancy, the President's mother).

Thompson quotes Francis Berry, Jr. as saying that about the close of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was born in the said cabin in Washington County. As Francis, Jr. was the son of Frank Berry with whom Nancy Hanks made her home from 1804 to 1806, and in whose house it is now claimed by Washington County Lincoln lore authorities that she was married; it is certainly not difficult to believe that the younger Berry would be the very best authority. In the Francis Berry home at the time Nancy went there to make her home in 1804, there is said to have been three children: Richard, a four-year-old boy, who became the father of the man whom Mr. Thompson quotes; Mary H., a three-year-old girl; and Rachel, one year old.

As described before in former pages, the cabin purported to be the birthplace of the President stood one-half mile southwest of the Frank Berry home where the wedding took place. After the wedding, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks set up housekeeping in this cabin; which, as will be again remembered, was the identical house Thomas helped his father and uncle build twenty-four years earlier when they all arrived from Virginia.

And this is the home Thomas maintained while he still went back and forth to Elizabethtown to his work; as, we believe, his record of pur-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

chases in the Blakely and Montgomery store in Elizabethtown confirms rather than disproves. And here is where all of Thomas Lincoln's children were born, not excepting Thomas, Jr., the baby, whose date of birth seems to have been lost to all authorities definitely, but said by some to have been in 1812. But, if Washington County claimants are correct, his birth must necessarily have been in the first six months of 1810.

To consider Mr. Thompson's affidavit closely, it seems doubtful if he could have quoted another witness who would be more reliable so far as having access to the facts he wished to establish. Berry was not so old as to be forgetful (probably, between fifty and sixty years of age). Unless he was the man who cast the lone vote in Washington County for Lincoln in 1860 he was certainly not prejudiced in Lincoln's favor; for, "at about the time of the close of the Civil War" he would more likely have considered the place of Lincoln's birth discreditable for his county rather than otherwise. At any rate it is not supposed that he would rate the claim for Lincoln's birthplace high enough to lie about it. He, without doubt told Mr. Thompson what he did for no reason except to tell the truth.

The testimony of Mr. William Hardesty, which Mr. Thompson includes in his affidavit goes a little farther back and states that he, Mr. Hardesty, actually witnessed the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks which was performed by the Reverend Jesse Head. Mr. Thompson's affidavit was taken April 13, 1891, by

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

the clerk of the Washington County Circuit Court, J. L. Wharton.

The son of the above Mr. Hardesty on November 7, 1919, made affidavit in the office of Polin and Polin, in Springfield, Kentucky. This elaborates on the testimony of his father given to Mr. Thompson in 1891. The son's name was William T. Hardesty and as he remembers the story, his father slipped away from home and went to the Lincoln wedding in 1806. His story varies from present belief to the extent that he said his father spoke of the marriage taking place in the small cabin, the same in which they went to housekeeping, "shortly after they were married."

The affidavit of Hardesty further states, "They afterwards lived in this cabin and it was there that Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, was born. The spring near the roadside has been called the Lincoln Spring since my earliest recollection." "My father was always quite positive of the fact that the President was born in this county."

Mr. Hardesty also adds some conflicting information in his statements when he says; "... that there were two children born to Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks in the cabin now standing, (1891) in this county, the first was a girl, who died in infancy, and the second was a boy; this would bring it up to 1809, the year that Abraham Lincoln was born; and that Thomas Lincoln moved to Larue, (then Hardin) County when this boy was about 18 months old."

In the writer's visit to this site in 1942, Mr. Pinkston pointed out the location of a grave which he said was visible in his and his older

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

brother's (whom he sometimes quoted) boyhood. The small grave, as he remembered, was about 35 or 40 feet from the southwest corner of the cabin site. To him the origin of the grave was vague, and only came down to the present time as a tradition, but anchored to the occupancy of the cabin by the Lincolns; that the child had been born in the old cabin, and that if it was not a child of the Lincolns' there was no other tradition which would account for the grave.

To substantiate the connection of the grave with the death of a child of Lincolns', it can be said with absolute certainty that in that early day most, if not all pioneer families had on some eminence or knoll a family graveyard. In the garden, a few hundred feet east, of the elder Richard Berry's pioneer home (where Nancy Hanks lived for some years) are the graves of Mr. Berry and his wife.

Near the old home of Frank Berry on high ground in the old orchard can be seen the graves with native sandstone markers of this Berry and his wife. Ten or fifteen other small flat stones stand up showing the location of as many graves. With the single grave at the Lincoln cabin location there is a total of three graveyards on the original Berry land entry, all within a triangular distance of about one mile.

It is possible that this small grave at the Beechland Lincoln cabin is none other than the grave which Lincoln referred to while in a reminiscent mood when he said that one of the last things he remembered doing while yet in Kentucky was going with his mother to visit the grave of her youngest child, a son who died in infancy.

For this surmise to be true, it is quite

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE .

necessary for a correction to be made in regard to some of the statements alleged by Mr. Hardesty. He says that Thomas Lincoln's first child was a girl and died in infancy. He never mentions another daughter, Sarah (two years older than Abraham who died at the age of twenty-two in Indiana). Lincoln's impression, if the foregoing reference to his visit with his mother to the grave is correct, was that there were three children, the last being an infant brother. Mr. Hardesty was under the impression that the first child died and was a girl, when the truth was that the last child died and was a boy. When we consider his statement in connection with the later known facts and the long period of time it was necessary for him to carry what at that time were ordinary events in his memory, it is not to be expected that there could be no errors in his statement. On the other hand, it is certainly remarkable and significant that he named the number and the sex of Thomas Lincoln's children absolutely correct.

It is a little strange that in the old Lincoln Bible, the record said to be in Abraham Lincoln's handwriting, there is no mention of either an infant brother or infant sister.

If a visit to the grave of an infant child at the old home in the Poortown neighborhood was made by Lincoln and his mother just before leaving Kentucky for their new home in Indiana, Lincoln would have been seven years old. As they lived on the Rolling Fork farm in Hardin County at that time, it was necessary for them to make at least a forty-mile trip back to Washington County. Such trips were made by horseback then, and there is no small wonder that the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

trip to the grave impressed Lincoln greatly. The trip, if made to their old neighborhood no doubt included a few days visit with the Berry families with whom his mother had long made her home before her marriage.

As there seems to be grave errors existing as to this third infant child of the Lincolns', its date and place of birth and burial, it is regrettable that Lincoln in telling of his visit to the grave with his mother did not mention some thing that would have been a key to the hidden facts. We hope this added speculation of a horseback visit to the grave by Lincoln and his mother will add no harm.

On February 2, 1925, John Thomas Haydon, living in Ralls County, Missouri, made oath to the following facts: His mother's maiden name was Rebecca McAllister; her mother, Kitty Moody, was a cousin to the Berry boys--Richard, Francis, and Edward (sons of Richard Berry, Sr.)--and also a cousin to Nancy Hanks.

In 1865, when it became known that the President had been assassinated, Mr. Haydon's grandmother, the above Kitty Moody, was visiting at his home in Kentucky and made the statement that she had had the pleasure of nursing one President, Abraham Lincoln. She then related in detail how she attended the Lincoln-Hanks marriage and danced at the infare following. She said that some years later, when she was visiting in one of the Berry homes, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were then living in one of the Berry cabins on the Berry land. When the word came to the Berry house that there was a new baby at the Lincoln cabin, she went across the field to see the new arrival, and was told that

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

the proud parents had called the child Abraham, after his paternal grandfather who had been killed by the Indians. She then spoke with pride of how she had held the little fellow in her arms.

It seems that if there is a question as to the birthplace of Lincoln, and that question can be settled by sworn affidavits, the one just quoted certainly leaves little doubt but that Abraham Lincoln was born in Washington County, Kentucky. There is nothing inconsistent about this story. It is clear-cut and from a clear mind. If Haydon's grandmother was at the wedding of the Lincolns, she was probably 18 or 20 years of age. At the time she related the story sworn to by her grandson, in 1865, she would be about 72 or 74 years old and, so far as age is concerned, her mind could be as clear as her story indicated.

To repeat: "Some years later, when she was visiting in one of the Berry homes, Thomas and Nancy were living in one of the Berry cabins on the Berry land;...word came announcing a new baby;...she went across the field to see the new arrival;...they called the baby Abraham"; etc. In this, "some years later," would be exactly two years, eight months, and two days from the time of the marriage to the date of Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1809. "They were living in one of the Berry cabins," which is a true statement, for the Lincoln Spring cabin still stood on the Berry land until 1911, when it was torn down and moved to Harrodsburg. "She went across the field to see the new arrival," which she would have to do if she was visiting the Frank Berry family on whose farm the Lincoln

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

cabin stood. The distance would have been about one-half mile southwest. "They called the baby Abraham," which leaves no question as to which baby of the Lincolns' she had reference to.

This affidavit of Haydon is as complete, as free from doubts and rings as true to the point in the establishment of the real birthplace of Abraham Lincoln as can well be inspired. An affirmation sworn to such as the above in support of the contention of Larue County which now possesses the Lincoln Birth Memorial is not in existence so far as the writer has knowledge. Probably if this proof was put up to Larue County authorities it would be answered by them that affidavits can easily be obtained to prove most anything. But, in their case they have not found it so easy; or, while now enjoying the honor, right or wrong, they prefer to ignore all controversies which tend to agitate the question, as they have all to lose and nothing to gain.

The following narrative, told by a colored minister who lived in Washington County and in the Beechland neighborhood, gives exactly the same substance as the foregoing but in a different style. He says: "Many years ago when I went to Beechland to serve the church there, I heard my own people as well as the white folks talk about President Lincoln being born there. I remember one day when I was called to the home of a very old lady who lived near Simpsonville to pray for her when she was sick. She was near one hundred years old. She told me many things about the early days. I distinctly remember her saying with considerable feeling that when President Lincoln was born in a cabin

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

near Beech Fork she was sent by her mistress to nurse him. 'Little did I think,' she said, 'as I held that scrawny little babe in my arms, that one day he would set me free!"

Certainly there could be nothing gained which would be to the minister's credit to fabricate this story, and just as certain no person, colored or white, would create the story without a basic fact some place back in their memory--no matter of how long standing on which to build the particulars. When this old colored lady said: "When President Lincoln was born in a cabin near Beech Fork," she stated a simple fact that is sufficient to settle the question as to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln for all time. It is proof positive if her narrative can be relied upon, and who can say it can not be?

Before leaving this old slave's story we wish to add a little surmise of our own which we can almost say we firmly believe. In the authentic and reliable "Lincoln Kinsman" No. 16 of October, 1939, on page seven of the eight-page pamphlet we find the following: "The widow of the pioneer (Richard Berry, Sr.) survived her husband about six years, and she evidently lived in the old homestead until her death in 1804. When she passed away and her unmarried son Edward came into possession of the place, it is said that Nancy moved into the home of one of her married cousins.

"Edward, the youngest son, did not marry until 1808 when he chose for his bride Mary or Polly Brazelton. Two years before he had listed for taxation five slaves which were probably the property of the Widow Berry estate. It is very likely that with slave labor in the home,

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Nancy Hanks had few menial tasks to do while with her aunt and cousin Edward."

When this minister made his call on the old lady many years ago, she was very old, nearing "one hundred." She had also been a slave and been set free. If she was free, the time of the minister's call was after 1863. Her birth necessarily would have been in about 1765 or 1770. At the time of Lincoln's birth she was probably 40 or 45 years old, an experienced slave "mammy" of her time. She lived in the Beech Fork neighborhood when Abraham Lincoln was born.

Edward Berry lived up the road from the Lincoln cabin about three-quarters of a mile. Could it possibly be that this old colored lady was not one of Edward Berry's five slaves which he is known to have given for taxation in 1806? Edward, a bachelor while Nancy lived with him and his mother, was married in 1808, one year before the child was born which the slave attended. Nancy was a cousin so endeared to the Berrys that to send her assistance at that important time would be the natural thing to do, and no doubt the slave was as pleased to go to Nancy as the "missus" was to send her.

The picture comes to mind of a February morning, with blue smoke from the stick and mud chimney curling upward, and a slave "mammy" coming down the road from Edward Berry's to enter a cabin and nurse a babe who will later set her free. Was there ever another picture like that?

What a relief if we could know, in this time of stress and war, of hate and fear, that the Thomas Lincolns and the Nancy Hankses of the future could be the parents of our rulers.

Chapter Six

THE INDIANA HOME

The rueful picture of Thomas Lincoln while he lived in Kentucky as proclaimed by the biographers of his son Abraham years after Thomas Lincoln's death certainly was as baseless as ever might be painted by his fellowmen. The light of dawn of discovery and research becomes brighter as the generations pass and Thomas Lincoln's life becomes more and more out of the "putrid pool" and "poor white trash of the South" until now it surely stands a peer, if not superior, to early pioneers of his day in Kentucky.

The period through which we have just followed Thomas Lincoln, in our opinion, not only rates highest as a just appraisal of his inherited worth, but it also demonstrated beyond question his ability to meet with self-reliance the hardships of his time.

While all of Thomas Lincoln's life in Kentucky was one which required work and business sagacity above the average of his day, we find no act of his which justifies condemnation. He was in court several times to defend his land titles, but in no one of the suits was there any criminal charge. He merely wanted the land he had bought, or his money back when his title was questioned.

As we are convinced that Thomas Lincoln main-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

tained his home in Washington County until some-time in the first half of 1810, we are doubtful if he and his family moved to the Mill Creek farm where the Lincoln memorial is now located. It is to that farm we believe he probably sent his mother and sister when they left Washington County and moved to Hardin. As his sister Ann was married before she moved to Hardin County, Feb. 3, 1801, is it not likely that she and her husband, William Brumfield, took her mother along to live on her brother's farm, "making a home for them, and they for him"?

One of the arguments used by those who believe that Thomas Lincoln went to Hardin County from Washington to live earlier than 1810 is that he served on numerous juries and received appointments as deputy sheriff, served as guard for prisoners, etc., in Hardin County, which would tend to establish the fact for his residence there. The argument meets with the fact that Jan. 12, 1802, he was appointed constable for the new county of Cumberland, where he had entered land May, 1801, and where there are no records that he had ever lived or intended to live. After serving on many juries and having several appointments in Hardin County, on Aug. 13, 1804, he was appointed marshall of Cumberland County. So the argument cannot hold good in that period of early Kentucky history.

Referring again to Thomas Lincoln's business sagacity it seems that he used the Blakely and Montgomery store as a sort of clearing house or bank, which fact we consider ingenious and instructive, as it shows how in pioneer days he carried on a system of practical banking.

While we have serious doubts that Thomas

THE INDIANA HOME

Lincoln ever moved to the Mill Creek farm, it is certain that he could not have lived there but a very few months if he moved to Hardin County in 1810 as we believe. Evidence of this is an item of record which is as follows: "May 11, 1811, Found stray horse on Knob Creek and advertised it." The Knob Creek farm was the one from which he moved to Indiana in 1816; and, as the horse was found on Knob Creek we would believe he was residing there when it was taken up and advertised. The Mill Creek farm was about seven or eight miles from the Knob Creek. While he seems to have had possession of the deeds to both the Mill Creek and Knob Creek farms until about the time he moved to Indiana, he had contracted for the Mill Creek farm first, paying Isaac Bush, his partner on the New Orleans trip, \$200 cash for it on December 12, 1808. Trouble over the title came up and it remained in court until the last month Thomas Lincoln lived in Kentucky, November, 1816, at which time Lincoln filed a bill against Bush for the return of the \$200.

If litigation over the title had begun in two years after he had purchased the farm from Bush, or in 1810, it does not seem likely that he would go to a farm to live over which there was litigation if he could get possession of the Knob Creek farm where he found the horse in 1811.

As the Lincolns left the Knob Creek farm to move to Indiana in November, 1816, then five years is all they lived there at most, or six years if they came directly to it from Washington County, which--in our opinion--was the case. On it Thomas Lincoln did the only farming he

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ever did in Kentucky on his own account, and it was the only home in Kentucky the boy Abraham ever remembered. He was probably between one and two years old when they moved to the Knob Creek farm, and six and a half years old when they came to Indiana.

The present appearance of the Knob Creek cabin site seems very much commercialized. A fine Government Road known as 62 runs northeast and southwest through the valley and a sandwich shop is standing on the supposed site of the old Lincoln cabin. The rush of running water down the rocky bottom of the stream, the rock and tree covered slopes of the steep sides of the mountain sized hills which form the deep valley, are possibly just as Lincoln saw them at the age of seven. The valley contains very little land on the sides of the creek back to the foothills which could be called attractive farm land, and the one of the very few references to this farm by Lincoln is easily believed when he referred to the rain up in the hills above flooding the creek to overflowing and "washing corn, pumpkin seed and all down the stream." This farm too became involved in the courts due to faulty title from mistakes in early surveying (it is said) as a bill of ejectment was filed on December 27, 1815, which no doubt had something to do towards his determination to move to Indiana before another year.

However, there seems to have been more than one impelling force which activated to cause restlessness in the early pioneers. In Thomas Lincoln's move out of Kentucky and into Indiana we can believe that two of them were: First, the disgusting experiences in his land specula-

THE INDIANA HOME

tions over faulty titles of Mill Creek and Knob Creek farms he had had in his last few years in Kentucky; second, (not so much a cause for moving as it was more likely the reason for the selection of the spot in Indiana) was the friends or relatives who might have preceded them to a new country.

In Thomas Lincoln's case, since he apparently seemed compelled to move we believe he followed the course and settled near one of his wife's uncles in Spencer County, Levi Hall. Earlier in this narrative it will be remembered that this man had married the mother of one Dennis Hanks; that she was a sister to Nancy Hanks Lincoln's father who may never have migrated from Virginia; and that she was also a sister to Elizabeth Hanks with whom we believe Nancy Lincoln as a young child went to live.

We are fairly familiar with both the Knob Creek farm in Kentucky, the farm he was leaving, and also the farm in Indiana to which he moved. Certainly he could see no great difference as to the quality of the two places, soil, or as a desirable place to live; for each of them required the hardest kind of labor to make it fit for cultivation. We have no authority to say that there were any improvements whatever on the Spencer County land, not even a cabin to move into when he landed.

In what manner Thomas Lincoln moved to Indiana we ourselves can not be sure. To follow the stories which relate this trip from Kentucky to Indiana by the Lincoln biographers is so confusing and contradictory as to be of little value. In fact, if we should form our opinion of the Lincolns leaving Kentucky as pictured by

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

most historians, we could not recognize them as the ones we have come to know from actual records in the archives in Kentucky. For instance:

We believe it was Herndon who described Lincoln as building a flatboat at the junction of Knob Creek and the Rolling Fork on which he floated down to and across the Ohio River to the Indiana side where he stored his goods; returned for his family; and after desperate hardships, finally arrived at his new home. In this description Herndon made it appear that most of his load of farming tools--which we would naturally suppose he would take along--consisted mostly of barrels of whiskey, some of which were lost in an unfortunate upset of his boat. We can hardly believe this was our Thomas Lincoln.

Then we have this version from the N. Stevenson biography, which says: "Vagrants, or little better than vagrants, were Thomas Lincoln and his family making their way to Indiana."

Nicolay and Hay have this version: "His earthly possessions were of the slightest, for the backs of two borrowed horses sufficed for the load."

W. Lamon, with sadness and pity laments: "Where he got the horses used upon this occasion, it is impossible to say." Lamon continues then with all positiveness that "His decision (to move), however, was hastened by certain troubles which culminated in a desperate combat between him and one Abraham Enloe. They fought like savages; but Lincoln obtained a signal and permanent advantage by biting off the nose of his antagonist."

Now, in view of all the above versions, all

THE INDIANA HOME

positive statements, so positive that each of them surely were eyewitnesses to the scene, we hesitate to even offer a speculation, for we were not there and can not be so positive. Since none of the above biographers, seem to agree in their statements, we would like to ask each of them, "How do you know?"

We are indeed sorry it is too late to inform Mr. Lamon that Thomas Lincoln possessed four horses of his own at the time he moved to Indiana from Kentucky. One more comment: we can find no court record against Thomas Lincoln for "savage" fight. What excuse can the above authors offer for their positiveness in these attacks on Thomas Lincoln? The fight mentioned seemed to have been written by a ring-side reporter

We have followed the trail which Thomas Lincoln is supposed to have taken when he moved from the Knob Creek farm in Kentucky to the Cabin site in Spencer County, Indiana, where he was to make another home which he occupied for fourteen years. When we crossed the Ohio River near the mouth of Anderson Creek and then followed the trail northwest as he is said to have done, we were forced to the inevitable conclusion that, when considering the obstacles he encountered in a primitive country, there was some impelling force in the make-up of most of the early pioneers which caused their constant westward settlements--not understood by us of today. Surely something was in Thomas Lincoln's mind more than a hunt for better land, for the Knob Creek farm with its meager improvements was equal to or better than the prospect ahead

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

(as we saw it) knowing he was to find no meager improvements of any kind.

We could think of but one possible excuse for the direction he took from Anderson Creek, and that was to find Levi Hall. Our own belief that Levi Hall, the husband of Nancy Lincoln's aunt Nancy Hanks (as we have often mentioned) was somewhere ahead of Thomas Lincoln's caravan is based purely on some incidents which will be mentioned later, and not from any authentic record. We may say here, however, that we do have data that Levi Hall did marry Nancy Hanks in Kentucky, and if records exist we believe they might be found in Bardstown, Nelson County.

After his marriage to the mother of Dennis Hanks, we have found no reference to him until sometime after Thomas Lincoln had settled in Spencer County, and then we are compelled to speak from inference, rather than from positive knowledge.

Arriving at the cabin site in the Lincoln country from the trail out of Kentucky, it was our good fortune to find one survivor in the immediate Lincoln country who could speak of the old pioneer settlers of Lincoln's time through the channels of family tradition. This man was Harry Crawford, who, as a bachelor, still lives on a part of the Josiah Crawford estate which lies directly south of the Lincoln cabin site about a mile.

In speaking of the early pioneers in general, Crawford said that most of them were related in some way, but only in a few cases did he know the exact relation. He said that his own family had endeavored to learn the maiden name of his grandmother, Josiah Crawford's wife, but

THE INDIANA HOME

no Bible record or even tradition reveals the much hunted information. It was revealed in the conversation with Crawford, that his knowledge of Lincoln lore as is related to Spencer County was mostly traditional, having come to him by word of mouth through his ancestors. As an example, he had no knowledge of Dennis Hanks or of the family of Sparrows with whom biographers generally agree came to Spencer County from Kentucky in about a year after the Lincolns came. The Sparrow name was unknown to him. Tradition had failed to bring either name down to him, and his lack of knowledge of those two names, Hanks or Sparrow, was convincing that what he knew did not come to him from the written record.

Crawford gave his age at fifty-four years, had always lived on some part of his ancestor's estate except fourteen years which he spent in the United States Army. Having with us a book which had a likeness of this man's grandfather, we compared the picture of Josiah Crawford to the likeness of the grandson, Harry, and were struck with the similarity of their features. Harry was about 140 pounds in weight; somewhat stooped, with a walk beginning to lose its youthfulness and take the slower step of age; narrow face but not so much as to be pronounced; eyes gray; and a nose thin, so thin and long that it could have been traded with that on the face of his grandfather's picture, and no one would be the wiser. We are sure that if Abraham Lincoln could have seen Harry Crawford the day we met him, he would have said: "How you do resemble your grandfather."

During the time we were with Crawford we

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

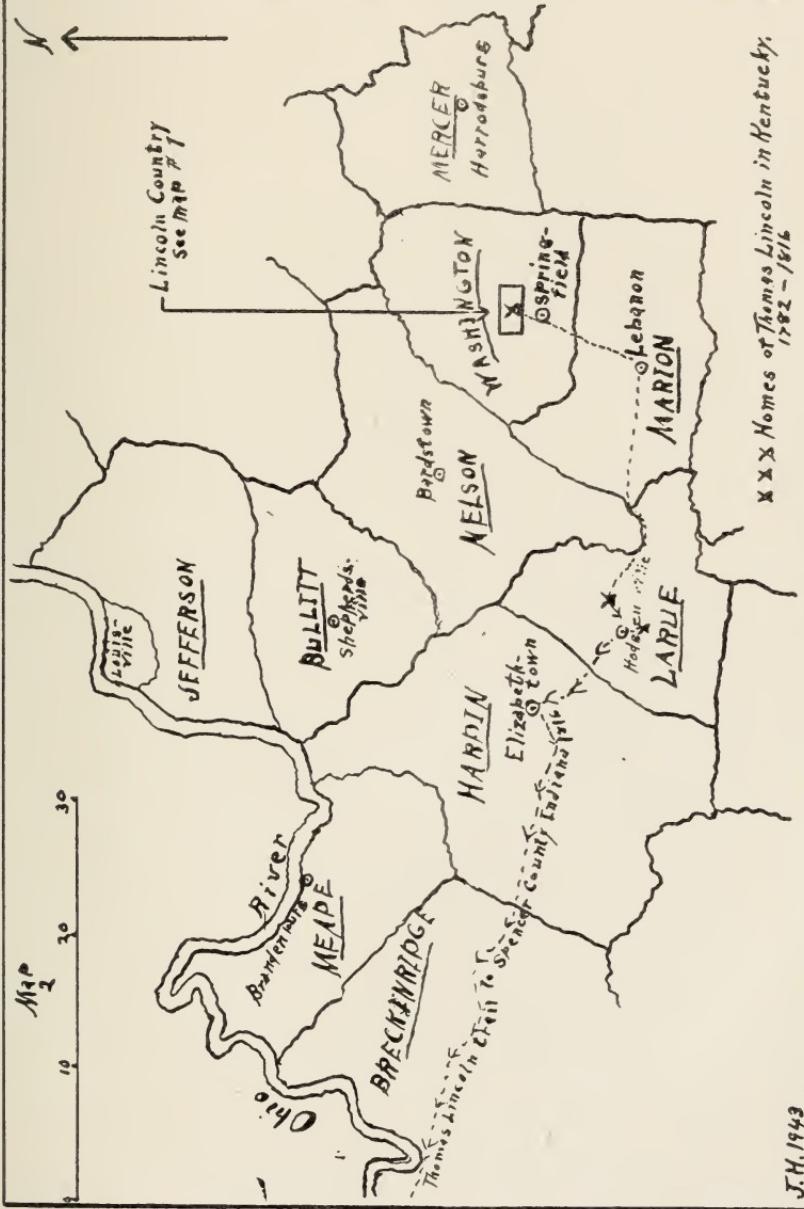
kept on the alert to learn of any feeling of resentment which might have once existed between the pioneer Lincoln and Crawford families, due to the supposed stiff price Lincoln was said to have paid for the damage to Weem's LIFE OF WASHINGTON which he had borrowed from Crawford. Crawford volunteered to go with us to the location of the old Josiah Crawford cabin site where Lincoln and his sister Sarah both worked, he as a farm hand and she as a house maid.

The site of the cabin was north of where Harry lived about three-quarters of a mile on an unimproved road, which was too muddy for machine travel, and then back off the road through a field to the east another quarter mile. This trip afforded time for conversation while we walked together, and at no time did Crawford ever indicate the slightest resentment or disrespect for the Lincolns. On the contrary, he related a story which we regarded the reverse of any grudge.

We had hardly started to the cabin site until he began to tell of the loss of a valued family heirloom which had been in the Crawford family from the time Lincoln had worked for his grandfather. This was a tintype picture of Lincoln as a boy, taken sometime while the Lincolns lived in Spencer County. Visitors from Kansas City, a distinguished looking man and two well dressed women, had called on his mother and asked for material which might be used in a book which the man proposed to write. The tintype picture had always been kept in the Crawford Bible. She let the visitors see the

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Lincoln County
See map p 77



J.H. 1943

xx Homes of Thomas Lincoln in Kentucky.
1782 - 1816

THE INDIANA HOME

book and the picture. After they had departed the picture was never seen again.

This tintype likeness of Lincoln, should it ever be recovered from those genteel thieves, would no doubt be one of the most prized of all the pictures of Lincoln now in existence. As contemptible as this theft was, Crawford made no comment on the act he had just related.

While picking our steps northward over the muddy road, Crawford kept pointing out the home sites of old pioneer families, some of which were familiar, and some entirely new to us. On the west side of the road about a quarter mile north of the Josiah Crawford home site stood the old cabin of Harry's uncle John, or his grandfather's brother. It stood back west off the road probably an eighth of a mile. The old Grigsby place was west about three-quarters of a mile and a little south. The spring at this place is still flowing, but the cabin is only a memory; however, a fairly modern home stands near by, with evidence that this place has never been unoccupied since Lincoln's time. About due west from where we climbed through a three-barbed wire fence to go back to the site of the old Josiah Crawford cabin, nearly a quarter mile is a small clump of second growth trees, probably fifteen or twenty, where Crawford told us the old log schoolhouse stood when Lincoln and his sister Sarah attended along with the Grigsbys, Crawfords, Durhams and others. Like all the other sites pointed out by Crawford, nothing now remains but the spots on which the little old log rooms stood. Their visualization can only come now from the imagination in the mind of the interested visitor.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

A true picture of this country can scarcely be imagined by the visitor as it must have appeared in Lincoln's boyhood. Crawford pointed out the original pioneer road or trail through the land as far as possible from the points from where they could be seen. The present day roads have long been straightened into due east and west and north and south, while the original trails wind around by all the old pioneer places and had little in common with directions. They are plainly noticeable by deep cuts where cultivation has not leveled them off, following over high ground and avoiding low and marshy places.

The old road leading west to the schoolhouse site is a deep depression of a depth of near a foot and a half, indicating that it was a passage way through the woods for many years, no doubt a hundred, before new surveys caused its abandonment. Crawford, in his memory of about fifty years pointed out the cleared fields which he said were untouched forests in his boyhood. From the description he gave of the country as he remembered it fifty years ago there can be little doubt that he saw it very much as Lincoln saw it in 1830, when he moved away, as no roads had been straightened and but little of the forests cleared.

After squirming through the barbed wire fence with considerable difficulty, we proceeded toward a small clump of second and third growth of trees a little northeast and a little past center of about a thirty-acre field. No division fence is present at this time although there are indications that the field, now a pasture, has at various times in the past been

THE INDIANA HOME

divided into several different lots. A depression was crossed which ran northwest and southeast about four or five hundred feet west of the clump of trees which carries swift streams of water in a rainy time, but was dry when we crossed it.

Crawford said that his grandfather's cabin stood right in the center of the growth of trees, the oldest of which we would guess was about forty or fifty years old. A slight mound, where the cabin stood, retains the appearance of an ash bank and verifies the statement of Crawford that the house was burned to the ground years ago; although we believe Crawford said he could just remember it.

We presume the house faced west, as the old trails road, yet visible, comes from the direction of the schoolhouse and bends north in a sort of semi-circle and then turns northwest towards the John Crawford cabin site. To the rear of the Josiah Crawford house site which we had just arrived at, about seventy-five feet east and a little south is the historic well which Lincoln helped Crawford dig. It is still in splendid condition with about three feet of the top part reconditioned by a new brick wall of comparatively recent construction. A common board cover protects the well now which no doubt at first had the pioneer type of Sycamore drum. Below the brick part of the wall the well has the original native limestone rock slabs which Josiah let down to Lincoln to lay up for the wall, without mortar, to keep the sides from caving in. They are as true and perpendicular as if built with a plumb bob, by the hand of an experienced brick mason. The distance to the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

water was twelve or fourteen feet down, with possibly four or five feet of water supply. Judging by the amount of cattle and hogs which evidently depended on this old well for their supply of drinking water, it has no doubt been dependable for over a hundred and twenty years.

Just north of the house site is the part of the cleared land which constituted about eight acres where the corn grew from which Lincoln stripped the blades for Crawford to pay for the damaged LIFE OF WASHINGTON. No doubt this field was about all the cleared land Crawford had at that time, and it can easily be imagined that it was yet full of green stumps with sprouts and weeds growing up around them. The field, no low or wet place showing, seems sufficiently rolling to have attracted first consideration for clearing.

Crawford displayed no disposition to deny the story of the damaged book and the steep price his grandfather demanded of Lincoln for the damage to it by the dashing rain. The story goes on to state that Lincoln was so gratified for the gift of the book after he had already overpaid for it by work of stripping blades for twenty-five cents per day for three days; that he, with the help of his father made a three-cornered wall chest of walnut and gave it to the Crawfords as further appreciation for the book.

The truth of this press gift in addition to the work of stripping the corn always seemed a little too generous to be true, but Crawford told us himself that the Lincolns did make and that his family possessed the three-cornered walnut press, and that it is at this time in the courthouse at Rockport. He did not say

THE INDIANA HOME

that the press was a gift; only that the Lincolns made it.

Of all the books which Lincoln is said to have come in contact with while living in Spencer County, Weem's LIFE OF WASHINGTON is most often referred to. This seems partly due to the manner in which he came in possession of it, the damage to it and the price he paid; but the effect and influence on the mind of Lincoln at that particular period of his life is much the greater story.

John Hanks, though doubtful authority, in an interview states that the book was borrowed from Crawford sometime after 1822 while he was in Indiana and worked for and near Thomas Lincoln. In that case Lincoln was probably fourteen or fifteen years old; an age when youthful ambition could easily expand to the point where he could see himself a great man, and no doubt did while standing barefoot in Mrs. Crawford's kitchen, and, in a boyish boast told her that he would some day be President of his country.

A bronze tablet now in the courthouse yard in Rockport gives the names of some fifteen or twenty Revolutionary soldiers who are buried in that county. The age of these men would have ranged from sixty upward when Lincoln is said to have read the LIFE OF WASHINGTON, and the inspiration coming to Lincoln by his actual contacts with these old soldiers of Washington while reading the book would have been great indeed.

Here, on this old clay patch of ground once belonging to Josiah Crawford originated the thought expressed in an informal speech before the Legislature in Trenton, New Jersey, while

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Lincoln was on his way to take his seat as President of the United States, in 1861. "May I be pardoned if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, Weem's LIFE OF WASHINGTON. I remember all the accounts there given of the battlefields and the struggles for liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton. The crossing of the river...the contest with the Hessians...the great hardships endured at the time...all fixed themselves on my memory, and, you all know, for you have all been boys, how those early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for."

In another notable speech he said: "Washington's is the mightiest name on earth, long since mightiest in the cause of liberty...still mightiest in the moral reformation. On that name no eulogy is expected. It cannot be. To add brightness to the sun or glory to the name of Washington is alike impossible."

A list of probably twenty-five titles of books can be totaled from Lincoln's numerous biographers, including school texts, but no other, to our knowledge ever reflected the deep impressions made on the mind of Lincoln as the LIFE OF WASHINGTON. Out of that book he remembered the speeches of Washington and his contemporaries on the formation of our government, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the principles of government; and out

THE INDIANA HOME

of those early impressions, those principles shot out of his mind in his great debates with Douglas as arrows from a warrior's bow. In our opinion the first step taken by Lincoln towards the White House was on the farm of Josiah Crawford. Surely, if "he walks the streets of Springfield at night," he visits the old well and walks in the fields and around the old cabin site on this old farm of Josiah Crawford's.

We took a picture of the pen around the well in line with the trees growing on the site of the cabin. Here the grandson of Josiah balked when we asked him to face the camera. "Never had my picture taken but once in my life," he said, "and that was when I was in the service." So, we respected his wish at the time and took the landscape of the famous field without him. But, when the film was developed, the silhouette of a stooped form appeared which resembled Harry Crawford very much as he walked away toward his bachelor home down the lonesome road south a quarter mile. But he knows only of his army picture.

It is said that only seven families were in the neighborhood to which the Lincolns came in the late fall of 1816, but unless one knows the amount of territory a neighborhood is supposed to consist of, it can hardly be known just how close these families lived to one another. At the old Crawford home site we could see the houses which now stand on the John Crawford farm, that of the Grigsbys and the site of the old schoolhouse; but in Lincoln's day it is doubtful if any of these places could be seen one from another. The home of the Lincolns

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

was still farther north, and cannot be seen for woods intervening after all the years.

The trail of the old road which the Crawfords depended on to reach their neighbors bent northwest and the first neighbor in that direction was Josiah Crawford's brother John, who lived as we have said about half a mile. Not looking inviting for cars at that time we did not follow the road north, but we gained the impression that Thomas Lincoln might have been the next settler in that direction, probably a mile from Josiah Crawford's. Coming down from the direction of John Crawford's the road bent around to the west and in another half mile it passed by the old schoolhouse, and then took a southwest course down by the Grigsbys, another quarter mile. Unless Abraham and his sister Sarah found a short cut through the woods, they would pass both Crawford homes on their way to school. While we were being shown over the immediate neighborhood by Harry Crawford from his grandfather's old home, we thought of the many old stories told concerning the school days of Lincoln, his different teachers, few indeed, his accomplishments and hardships and escapades, real and unreal, vague and imaginary, so we came to the conclusion that our own imagination might be just as reliable as any the biographers had given us.

Then we saw coming down the grass grown stumpy road from the north a six-foot-four boy with sleeves and pants legs all too short, as usual with tall young boys, possibly two suspenders with one depended on; a sister trailing, not so tall but skirt quite too long for our modern times, and a cardboard bonnet. Pass-

THE INDIANA HOME

ing Crawfords the tall young man was hailed as "Abe," and the girl, "Sarah." They were on their way to the little log schoolroom on down the road west a piece, where, on fair authority they learned besides reading, writing, and arithmetic, the manners of good society: He to remove his cap in the presence of ladies, she to bow and curtsy in the presence of gentlemen, and both the proper procedure in the manner of introduction by performing the act with their own schoolmates. Here we can imagine the face of Sarah deeply flushed while bowing to a certain schoolboy, for Aaron Grigsby was one of the scholars, and he became Sarah's husband. Here Abe "spelled down for the floor" and learned "reading, writing, and ciphering." This forest bound log schoolhouse was Princeton, Harvard, and Yale for the greatest President the United States may ever have.

The date of the death of Lincoln's mother seems very well established by records in the Lincoln Bible as of October 5, 1818. No record of her birth appears, and even her age in years is computed from statements made by witnesses so long after her death that little dependence can be placed in the truth of them. The record of her death in the Bible is said to be in the handwriting of her son. If Lincoln had known the date of her birth he certainly would not have left it out. If he had no authentic knowledge of her birth, then little attention need be given to the conjectures of others, so far as accuracy is concerned. In fact, the truth concerning the life of Lincoln's mother is so vague and uncertain, that her name is fast be-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

coming a symbol rather than a person of flesh and blood.

Since the exact birth date of Lincoln's mother is not known we have no good reason to not estimate the time of her birth as sometime in the year of 1784, or the year of her mother's entry into Kentucky. As particularly related in the fore part of this history, Joseph Polin, says that Nancy's mother was Lucy Shipley, married a Hanks in Virginia, etc., and by the dates given in their migrations, Nancy Lincoln was thirty-five years old in 1818, the year she died.

When the Lincolns moved away to Illinois in 1830, evidently the grave of Nancy Lincoln was left unmarked by plain or inscribed stones of any kind. Very shortly after the burial of Mrs. Lincoln the old graveyard began to be abandoned for the new one located by the Pigeon Creek Church about a mile southwest of the first cemetery. We remember the appearance of the cemetery some thirty years ago, before much had been done toward its improvement. At that time we believe fifteen or twenty markers might include all that were visible and some sunken places not marked where other graves may have been. It was plain that it had not been a burial place long for the area was scarcely a hundred feet square. The burial of Nancy took place in 1818 and that of her daughter, Sarah Grigsby, in 1828 in the Pigeon Creek Cemetery, indicating that abandonment of the old graveyard took place between those dates. Although the grave of Nancy Lincoln may be approximately near its true location as marked, there seems to be poor proof indeed that it is truly located. Herndon claims to have visited the place

THE INDIANA HOME

in 1865, or forty-seven years after the burial of Mrs. Lincoln and found no stone or marker, merely deciding the place by depressions he found and the memory of one lady Richardson who was at the burial, but not with Herndon at the time he visited the grave. Even at that, the present stone was not located at the supposed site of the grave for fourteen years after Herndon was there, when P. E. Studebaker marked the grave in 1879 (sixty-one years after the burial).

At the time we visited the cemetery, beside the Lincoln gravestone there were several native sandstone slabs on either side of the grave which were taken to be gravestones. In speaking to our friend Harry Crawford of the change now going on in regard to the old cemetery he seemed to be surprised that the old stones had been removed, indicated regret, and believed that the authorities would surely replace them. Asked if he knew whose the graves were that were by the Lincoln grave, he said he had been there many times long ago when a boy, and that he remembered some of them were Halls, but was not certain as to others.

This statement of Crawford constitutes verification of the Lincoln tradition still extant in Illinois as given us by Nancy A. Hall, who is still living, as it also confirms the statement of John Hanks in his interview by Herndon in 1865, when he said that Nancy Lincoln was buried by the side of the Halls.

Chapter Seven

LIFE IN INDIANA

The evidence of Nancy Hall as referred to comes directly from father to son to daughter. And here we wish to recall to the reader's notice our statement of several pages back when we said we believed that the family who had preceded Thomas Lincoln to Indiana was Levi Hall. In our story much will concern this family of Halls beginning at this place in our narrative. From this point the Hall family becomes blood relation to Abraham Lincoln. While we have no direct evidence, we are as sure that Thomas Sparrow and his wife are buried by the side of Nancy Lincoln as we are the Halls, for this reason: Elizabeth Sparrow was the aunt Elizabeth Hanks whom we have mentioned earlier as the one who took Nancy as a child and kept her until she went to live with the Berrys. Elizabeth was a sister to Levi Hall's wife Nancy. The Halls came to Indiana first, the Lincolns followed Halls, and the Sparrows followed Lincolns in about one year (1817). Levi Hall's wife being an own aunt to Nancy Lincoln, made the children of Hall and Nancy own blood cousins to Abraham Lincoln. The Halls died first, and the Sparrows soon followed them to the grave, and if the Halls were buried in the cemetery as the evidence seems to prove, it would certainly

LIFE IN INDIANA

be reasonable to believe the Sparrows were also, as the two women were sisters, a long way from their native Kentucky, and the Lincoln cemetery the only convenient graveyard.

Nancy Lincoln's death occurred only a few days after the death of the Sparrows, so we conclude that by the side of Nancy Lincoln lay two of her father's sisters, Nancy Hall and Elizabeth Sparrow, and their husbands, Levi Hall and Thomas Sparrow.

To proceed a little farther with the Halls, one of Levi Hall's sons, Squire Hall, in 1826 married Matilda Johnston, Abraham Lincoln's step-sister; while Squire was an own blood cousin as explained above. Squire's son was John J. Hall, whose daughter, Nancy A. is our informant.

To this period in our narrative we are personally satisfied with the closely woven relationship existing between all the members of the Kentucky families who have in some way been active participants on the stage of Lincoln lore; yet we concede that one thread is broken in the beginning of the story which prevents a water-tight weave. In this we refer to our effort to establish the true relationship of Nancy Hanks to the Joseph Hanks, Sr. family, in which gloss-over we could only assume that Nancy's father was a dead son of the elder Hanks which resulted in her father's name not mentioned in the Joseph Hanks, Sr. will. We also assumed that Nancy, at the time she was in the household of her grandfather and in the care of her aunt Elizabeth, in order to avoid possible complications, was given her dead father's part. Therefore a guardian, Richard Berry, was ap-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

pointed. Receiving her part directly from the hand of her grandfather, neither she nor her father were named in the will. In order to cement the broken ends of this thread a little stronger, we mention the family tradition of the Halls, and our own conviction that the Sparrows lie side by side with Nancy Lincoln in the cemetery. By all angles of reasoning, certainly Nancy Hall and Elizabeth Sparrow were own aunts to Nancy Lincoln, which could not be unless both aunts were sisters to Nancy's father, whatever his name might be.

Had Levi Hall and his wife Nancy never moved to Spencer County, or if they had never had children, probably no further mix-up in the Lincoln family would have taken place. But some children were born to them, and by the marriage of one of them to one of the daughters of Thomas Lincoln's second wife, Sarah Bush Johnston, the Halls and Lincolns became as badly mixed as the Hankes and Lincolns had already become.

We are already fairly well acquainted with Sarah Bush, who married Daniel Johnston only a few weeks before her brother Isaac and Thomas Lincoln returned from New Orleans on his flat-boat trip for the store of Blakely and Montgomery.

In the summer of 1815 Daniel Johnston died, leaving her a widow with two daughters, Elizabeth and Matilda; and one son, John D. Johnston. Their ages were not known but all were born in the nine years between 1806 and 1815.

One year and two months after Nancy Lincoln had passed away Thomas Lincoln returned to Elizabethtown, married the widow of Daniel Johnston and returned to his home in Indiana

LIFE IN INDIANA

with her, her two daughters, and her son. Their marriage took place on December 2, 1819, and was performed by Reverend George L. Rogers. At this time Thomas was forty-three years of age and Sarah Johnston thirteen years younger.

When Thomas Lincoln returned to Indiana with his new wife his family then consisted of him and his wife, Abraham and Sarah Lincoln, Dennis Hanks, and the three children of his wife, making in all eight to be housed and fed. Dennis Hanks was then twenty years old, while all the others were between eight and twelve. Dennis Hanks had been in the Lincoln home from the time the Sparrows died, or a little over a year.

Now, it should be remembered, in this family a future President of the United States was being reared, and Thomas Lincoln was head of the family. Should not Thomas Lincoln have at least one word of praise for taking this family through the hardships of pioneer life until they were all married or had grown to self-supporting manhood? Who of his calumniators would have dared to undertake the task? With what success?

Some incidents in the story of the Lincolns seem a little strange and queer when we try to follow their true connections, but in most cases it is because certain data are needed to clear a point not definitely understood; as for instance, the need for a guardian for Nancy Hanks before she became of age. On the other hand, in the case of Dennis Hanks--whom we have mentioned as coming to live with the Lincolns from the home of the Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow, after their deaths--we have a case where the facts seem definitely clear, but strange and queer.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

So far as we can discover, no doubt exists as to the fact that Dennis came to Indiana with his aunt Elizabeth and Thomas Sparrow, and was making his home with them until they both passed away, while his own mother Nancy (Levi Hall's wife) lived only a short distance. Even when Dennis was required to find another home he did not go to live with his mother, but to Thomas Lincoln's, where he still lived after Nancy Lincoln, his cousin, had passed away, until he was married to Elizabeth Johnston, June 9, 1821. We can easily imagine the sympathetic Nancy Lincoln coming from the last of the newly made graves of the Sparrows in late September, 1818, and leading the bereaved and homeless nineteen-year-old Dennis down the steep hill north a quarter mile to her own log cabin home; from where, in one short week, she herself would be carried a corpse up the same path to be laid beside the Sparrows.

After the death of his cousin Nancy Lincoln, Dennis Hanks lived on in the home of Thomas Lincoln. Here we have two explanations, neither backed by authentic records; one, that the Halls were dead; the other, the fatherly kindness and sympathy of Thomas Lincoln for the homeless boy, his departed wife's cousin.

Late information gained from the unimpeachable "Lincoln Kinsman" of May, 1939, is our authority for saying that the Sparrows had no children of their own, had lived for a short time in Mercer County after they were married in 1796, and moved to Hardin County in 1798. Here the unmarried Nancy, Elizabeth Sparrow's sister, came to live in the home of the Sparrows where she met the man who became the father of



Pigeon Creek Church in Spencer County where Lincoln's sister, Sarah Lincoln Grigsby, was buried. Old Grigsby monument on right by new stone.



The John J. Hall place, part of Thomas Lincoln farm. Present home of Nancy A. Hall and "Abe the Second."

LIFE IN INDIANA

Dennis Hanks, Jesse Friend, a brother-in-law to Thomas Sparrow. The mother of Dennis, in time, met and married Levi Hall; followed the Halls and Lincolns to Indiana in 1807, and there died.

The Sparrows made a will on September 21, 1818, in which all their property was to go to Elizabeth Sparrow as long as she lived, then to Dennis Hanks. On September 28th, the will was acknowledged by Thomas Carter, and on October 5th, the day Nancy Lincoln died the will was evidently filed with the court in Rockport. In signing the will Thomas Sparrow had made an X, and Nancy Lincoln had also signed as a witness by making an X.

It is a little strange that stories of love and courtship never emanated from the cabin home of the Lincolns while living in Indiana. There were three good reasons why such stories may have had support; namely, Sarah Lincoln, Elizabeth and Matilda Johnston. All three of these young ladies courted and married from this cabin home of their parents, yet no romance of sufficient importance ever seems to have made the headlines. All married within a five-year period.

The first to marry June 9, 1821, were two of the same household, Dennis Hanks and the eldest of the Johnston sisters, Elizabeth.

Sarah Lincoln was second to marry. Her marriage took place on August 2, 1826, to Aaron Grigsby.

Matilda, the second of the Johnston sisters, married Squire Hall, September 13, 1826.

Sarah Lincoln, nineteen years of age at the time of her marriage, died two years later, January 20, 1828. She lies buried in the Pigeon

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Creek Cemetery in Spencer County. Her death is said to have resulted from childbirth. Her courtship and marriage may not have been the cause, but for some reason her marriage into the Grigsby family created a feud between that family and the Lincolns. It brought on a local tempest in the neighborhood which lasted until Sarah's death, and possibly as long as the Lincolns lived in Indiana.

This feud must have been the center of interest in the way of excitement among many of the pioneer families in the Pigeon Creek neighborhood for quite a while. It caused--according to Nat Grigsby, a brother of Aaron, in an interview with Herndon 37 years afterward--a quarrel between Sarah's brother Abraham and another brother of Aaron's, William, a fight which was finally settled in a very intelligent way so far as Abe was concerned. He allowed his step-brother, John D. Johnston, to fight it out with William. The fight was terrific, according to brother Nathaniel, and people came to see it from miles around. "Johnston was badly hurt" but at that Nat left the impression that the fight was a draw. This feud afforded Abraham a splendid opportunity to exercise his pent-up mental ability, and that restlessness may have been the instigation for the "terrific" fight he so very generously gave up to Johnston to settle.

The Lincolns were not invited to a double wedding which took place at the Grigsbys when "Reuben" and "Charles" were married. So, to even things up, Abe wrote a satire which became known locally as "The Chronicles," a sort of reflection on the infare or reception to the

LIFE IN INDIANA

boys when they brought their wives home from "a far off country" where they were compelled to go to find them, being too well known, according to "The Chronicles," in their own country.

To make a happy ending, it should be said that Nat, in his interview with Herndon, September, 1865, said that all the Grigsbys had forgotten the feud long ago, and all voted for Lincoln for President in 1860.

Dennis Hanks and his wife Elizabeth Johnston lived nine years in Indiana and had five children before moving to Illinois in 1830 with the Lincolns; Squire Hall and his wife Matilda Johnston lived in Indiana a little over three years before their move to Illinois. Only one son was born to them in Indiana, John J. Hall, who was a baby eleven months old when the move was made.

On this most notable trip of the Lincolns to Illinois in 1830 thirteen persons constituted the clan: Thomas, Sarah Bush, and Abraham Lincoln were three; Dennis Hanks, his wife, and four children constituted the Hanks family; and Squire Hall, wife, and baby John J. the Hall family.

It will be seen now, since Dennis Hanks and Squire Hall have married the Johnston sisters, that half-brothers (their mother was Nancy Hanks Hall) have become brothers-in-law also, and both are second cousins to Abraham Lincoln by blood connection (their mother was the aunt to Lincoln's mother). Squire Hall was not the only one of the Levi Hall family, although we have no definite knowledge of the size of his family, or what became of them after the death of their parents with the exception of Squire,

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

who married the Johnston girl. Dennis (while corresponding with Herndon) once spoke of his half-brother William Hall who lived somewhere in the West. We believe that the Wesley Hall from whom we quote was also a brother of Squire Hall and half-brother to Dennis Hanks. This opinion we get altogether from his story.

The story is not widely published, and this is a copy from a newspaper of several years ago.

"The Halls had to pass the Lincoln home going to and from the mill. One day Wesley had been kept late at the mill, and was going home with the grist on a cold, dark, winter evening. It was snowing furiously; so when he came to the Lincoln cabin, he decided to stop for the night. He made his usual 'Hel-lo' out in front in the usual backwoods fashion. The rest of the story follows: 'By and by I heard the door begin to creak on its wooden hinges, and then through the storm I saw Old Tom a-shadin' his eyes a-tryin' to see who I wuz. And purty soon, satisfyin' himself it wuz me, he leaned back and laughed a big, broad laugh, and then a startin' out to where I wuz, he sez, sez he, "Is that you, Wesley? You git right down from thar and come in out of the weather." So I commenced to git ready to slide down off my sack and by the time I got ready to light, old Tom wuz there and helped me down. Then a turnin' around lookin' towards the cabin, he calls out a time or two, big and loud: "Abe, O Abe," and he aint' more'n called til I seen Abe comin' through the door, and when he asked what wuz wanted, and seein' who I wuz at the same time, old Tom sez: "Come out here and git Wesley's

LIFE IN INDIANA

grist whils I put his hoss in the stable. Wesley's mighty nigh froze, I recon."

"Then he laughed again. Well, I wuz cold, I can tell you, fer I hadn't had anything to eat cept parched corn since morning. Well, as I say, old Tom told Abe to come out and get my sack, and I noticed as Abe come out to where I wuz he hadn't but one shoe on, and I thinks to myself, what's up with Abe? Fer I saw Abe wuz a-walkin' on the ball of his heel so's to hold his big toe up which wuz all tied up, and by this time I reckon there wuz mighty nigh six inches of snow on the ground. Yit Abe's foot wuz so big and long it didn't make no difference if the snow wuz that deep, Abe hadn't any trouble to keep his sore toe above the snow line. When I asked him what wuz the trouble with his foot he told me he'd split his big toe with the axe out in the clearin' that day. Well, then he wuz as big and stout as he ever wuz, and so he jest reached over and took that sack of meal with one hand and layin' it across his arm, he and me went into the house whils old Tom put the hoss in the pole stable.

"I setdown in front of the fireplace and commenced to thaw out, and in a little bit old Tom come in, and a settin' down by me a slappin' his hands together and then a rubbin' em so, like he allus' done, he sez, sez he: "Wesley, you got purty cold I reckon, didn't you?" And when I commenced to say I did, Mrs. Lincoln come in and she says, says she: "Wesley, I reckon you are hungry?" And I told her I wuz; and then I told her about the parched corn. And then she sez: "We haint got no meal to bake bread, we're out just now, but," a-pointin' to

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

the big bank of embers that I'd already noticed in the fireplace, and of course knowed what it meant, she says, says she: "We've got some potatoes in thar a bakin' and we'll git a bite fer you purty soon." At that I spoke up and I says, says I, "Just help yourself out of my sack thar, Mrs. Lincoln." And so she done as I told her.

"Well, old Tom and me and Abe went on talkin' and purty soon I heard a funny grindin' noise back of me, and I looked around to see what it wuz, and it wuz Mrs. Lincoln hollerin' out a big turnip. She wuz a-makin a grease lamp. Course I'd seen many a one. (The forerunner of our modern flashlight.) She hollered it out and cut a small groove in it on the lip, and after she'd filled it with hog's lard and laid a wick in the notch, and lit it, she handed it to me, and a butcher knife to Abe, and she says: "Boys, go and get me some bacon." So me and Abe went out to a little pole smokehouse and I held up the light while Abe cut a half moon out of a side of bacon. So Mrs. Lincoln went on with gitten' supper, and by and by she says: "Supper's ready." So when we set down to it we had baked potatoes, corn cakes and fried bacon. After the supper dishes wuz washed up, Old Tom, a slappin' his hands together and a rubbin' em together like I say, he says, says he: "Now Abe, bring out your book and read to us." Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to folks round about. Well, Abe reached up on a shelf where he kept his books and then a stirrin' the fire on the hearth with

LIFE IN INDIANA

some dry stuff he had piled in one corner of the jamb, he commenced to read.

"It wuz the life of Ben Franklin. He read to us till bed time, and that night Abe and I slept together up in the loft. We got up there through a scuttle hole in one corner of the ceilin', and to git up to it we had to climb up a peg ladder made by borin' holes in the logs and insertin' wooden pins. I remember the bed-stid, which of course I saw many a time. It wuz a mighty sorry affair; still, it answered the purpose. A hole wuz bored in the north wall and a rail-like piece wuz sloped off to fit this. The same thing wuz done on the west wall, and these two rails wuz brought together and fastened in the same way to an upright post out in the floor and then acrost these wuz laid split boards or whipped plank or some thin slats rived out, and on these wuz a gunny sack filled with leaves gathered from the woods. On this Abe and me slept covered with bear skins."

Were we to comment on the narration above which is credited to a Wesley Hall, we would say that, had it been continued by the child above mentioned who is to make the trip into Illinois with the Lincolns after he had grown to manhood we would find it difficult to distinguish which part was Wesley's and which was John J. Hall's. The significance in this similarity of vernacular in speech is sufficient proof to us that Wesley and Squire Hall were schooled in the same home, and the son of Squire and nephew of Wesley inherited their language. It is plainly evident to this day in the speech of Nancy A. Hall (Thomas), the daughter of John J. Hall.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

It would appear that Wesley at the time of this night at the Lincolns was no older than Abe. He was addressed as Wesley by both Thomas and Mrs. Lincoln. He was treated only as a boy by Mrs. Lincoln when she handed him the turnip oil lamp to light Abe to the smoke house for bacon. Thomas took care of Wesley's horse because Abe had a sore toe, and after supper Thomas asked Abe to read to the house in preference to conversation. Thomas Lincoln no doubt was intensely interested in the life of Benjamin Franklin, for it is reasonable to believe his own father had related stories of Franklin which were closely associated with Lincolns in Virginia.

As no mention was made of any other member of the Lincoln family but Thomas, his wife, and Abe, the visit of Wesley was no doubt in one winter from 1827-1829, as the last of the girls in the Lincoln home was married in the fall of 1826, and from that time until their removal to Illinois in 1830, it is presumed only Abe, his father and step-mother constituted the family.

Neither would the cordial and neighborly reception of Wesley Hall have been unusual in the Lincoln home; for, as in the case of Squire Hall and Dennis Hanks, he was a second cousin to Abe.

In 1828, and from this Spencer County home Abe went to make his first trip to New Orleans. He was nineteen years old when he helped build the flatboat and start his trip from Rockport, Indiana. A marker about twenty rods south of the present landing now designates the place of his departure. Good evidence remains of an old

LIFE IN INDIANA

road which leads down to the water's edge of the Ohio. With the exception of a gradual slope of the bank at this place, it is plain that there was no other place either up or down the stream for a long way from it which was a suitable or natural landing. Sometime since 1828 a vast amount of blasting has been done to make the present more convenient landing, which lies north at the foot of the steep hill coming down from the main street of Rockport. Since the old landing site was the only natural one near the town, there can be no doubt that flatboats had been built and floated away down the river from it since the beginning of white men's traffic on the Ohio, and this one of Gentry and Lincoln's was certainly no novelty for the town of Rockport.

In this first experience of flatboating, it is our belief that Lincoln and his employer Gentry were assisted materially by the carpenter and professional ability of Thomas Lincoln. Boy that Abraham was, we can imagine that this was the culmination of a long desire: to make this initial trip down the river, believing that some day the river might furnish him with the opportunity for a career, finally reaching the top as a steamboat captain. Whether this surmise is true or not, it is known that all through his later life, his stories, anecdotes, and speeches were strongly impregnated with river lore. He gave proof of his love for boats and rivers by: another New Orleans trip beginning on the Sangamon River in Illinois; his interest in the undertaking of the ill-fated *Talisman* boat in its endeavor to prove that river navigable; in his liberal consent while

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

in the Legislature to build canals in the State of Illinois; and finally as late as 1848 when he patented a design for floating river boats off the shoals, remarking that he reckoned it would work where the ground was a little damp.

On the bronze tablet at the old Rockport river landing these words are inscribed: "At this point the Emancipation of slavery began." Having reference, of course, to his alleged historic visit to the slave auction while on this trip to New Orleans, where he was quoted by his comrade, presumably Allen Gentry and others to have said: "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard."

Whether Lincoln actually expressed his hatred for slavery at that time and in those words or not, it still has the virtue, if not true, of doing no harm. The story can easily be believed up to a certain point, however, and no doubt each of the boys who were with Abe expressed himself equally strong. But, in our opinion, there was nothing said on that occasion by nineteen-year-old Abraham Lincoln intimating prophecy in regard to the end of slavery.

It would be quite natural for all the anti-slavery boys in the crowd around the slavery block to have been thoroughly disgusted with what they were witnessing, and all would have wished for an opportunity to have gotten even with the sale crier and the buyers for cruelty and utter lack of sympathy for the slaves as human beings.

It was something like thirty-four years after this slave auction at New Orleans that Lincoln declared in a notable speech that if he could save the Union without the interference with

LIFE IN INDIANA

slavery, he would do it. In our opinion, if the abolition of slavery was ever a premeditated thought of long standing, it was when he formulated these words: "If slavery isn't wrong, then nothing is wrong." Those words were both armor and a two-edged sword with which he fought his way to the Presidency and wrote the Emancipation Proclamation. If Lincoln conceived those words while witnessing the slave auction in New Orleans on this trip, then the bronze tablet at the old Gentry landing in Rockport is properly worded.

As further evidence that the slavery episode is only a pleasing story with sentimental coloring is the fact that the identical story is told as originating on Lincoln's second trip to New Orleans in 1831. This last time it was circulated by John Hanks, who (as Lincoln himself once said) got no farther on that trip than St. Louis, when he turned back and walked to his home in Decatur.

We have expressed our opinion of the New Orleans prophetic slave auction story only to show the runaway tendency of the imaginations of men. Sometimes a story may be over-good as well as over-bad. The Lincoln family seemed to suffer from both extremes.

The unembellished slave auction story in all probability was that on both trips of Lincoln to New Orleans he and his companions did visit the slave auction exactly as all visiting Northerners to the South did in slavery days. Slave auctions were probably one of the greatest attractions the South afforded and New Orleans the greatest of all the auctions. What Lincoln saw, heard, and said while he looked on the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

proceedings at the ages of nineteen and twenty-three respectively was no different than was usually heard from bystanders at such auctions, depending on the degree of love or hatred for the institution each visitor had. From our observations Lincoln family traditions were not noted for any unusual hatred for slavery. In fact, it is recorded that in the will made by the widow of Isaac Lincoln, who died in 1834, one item reads: "To Phoeba Crow, wife of Campbell Crow, my negro girl, Margaret and her four children, to wit, Lucy, Mina, Martin and Mahaha." In three other items as many as twenty-five slaves were bequeathed to relatives. Isaac Lincoln was a brother of Lincoln's grandfather Abraham, whose farm Thomas Lincoln, the President's father worked on in Tennessee about the year of 1800. It is also on record in the Hardin County archives that Thomas Lincoln was deputized a number of times to guard prisoners, and in 1805, in March, was "Appointed patroller in 'northwardly' part of Hardin County to guard against runaway slaves." Certainly Lincoln family tradition was not unanimous against the institution of slavery. In our opinion, slavery remained fairly secure until Lincoln himself conceived the thought, the rock foundation for the Emancipation Proclamation: "If slavery isn't wrong, then nothing is wrong."

Before the Lincolns leave Indiana, we would respectfully call attention to this item in the "Lincoln Kinsman" of March, 1939: "June 7, 1823, Joins Pigeon Creek Baptist church by letter."

From that date, in every year until the Lincolns left for Illinois, including 1830, there

LIFE IN INDIANA

are items of church record concerning Thomas Lincoln and his family which prove that both he and his family were not only morally fit to belong to the church, but welcome and active members. On February 13, 1830, just fifteen days before the Lincolns started for their new home in Illinois, these items appear on the church minutes: "Appointed moderator at church meeting," and on the same date, "Appointed on church committee to settle dispute between Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Grigsby."

There are some other significant items from the minutes of Pigeon Creek Church which Herndon failed to find in his barroom conferences in 1865 while on the hunt for the truth concerning the family of his friend Lincoln. April 10, 1824, "Appointed by Pigeon Church Board to attend church conference." October 9, 1824, "On Pigeon church discipline committee to visit man and wife who had separated." Then on June 12, 1825, "One of three church trustees to arrange for repairing Pigeon church meeting-house." On June 21, 1825, his wife Sarah appears along with his name on the membership list.

On April 4, 1826, Thomas Lincoln's daughter Sarah was received into Pigeon church, and August 4, 1826, Thomas Lincoln was appointed on a committee to interview persons not in good standing in the church. And then a church subscription list records a gift from him on March 9, 1827 of twenty-four pounds of "manufactured corn." The poorer the biographers represent Thomas Lincoln to be, the greater the credit due him for the generous gift.

Whatever Thomas Lincoln's church record in

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Kentucky might have been, his record in Indiana is one of positive proof, as the old minutes of the Pigeon Creek Church prove, with thanks to the "Lincoln Kinsman." However, when he joined the Pigeon church, it was by letter, indicating that his letter was received from some other church before joining. Without positive proof, we can easily believe his church letter was from some Kentucky church with which he was affiliated before moving to Indiana in 1816. To that, we may say we have a clue, but not a proof. We quote the following item for what it may be worth: "May 24, 1806, (18 days before he was married) Mrs. Ogden, wife of Benjamin Ogden, the Methodist preacher, secured some silk at Blakeley and Montgomery store by order of Thomas Lincoln and paid twelve shillings for it." This was at Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Back in the Lincoln country in Washington County, Kentucky, the church site is pointed out at which the Lincolns were said to have attended, but we have no knowledge that Thomas or Nancy were members there.

Chapter Eight

THE MOVE TO ILLINOIS

Just how John Hanks happened to move to Illinois is not known to us, but we have a suspicion that he, like pioneers of his day trailed some friend or relative. At any rate he was living about seven or eight miles west of Decatur, Illinois, in 1828. Two years after, early in 1830, Dennis Hanks made a trip to Illinois, visited his cousin John and came back to Spencer County with great stories of good land and easy farming. This seems to be the traditional story of the incentive of three families to change their homes. These three families all very much related were: Dennis Hanks, consisting of his wife and four children; Squire Hall, his wife and one child of about a year old; and Thomas Lincoln, his wife and her son, John D. Johnston, and Abraham.

Of all the many stories told by different writers which relate particulars of this migration to their new home, none seem absolutely reliable. Even the exact number of wagons, the number of animals to each wagon, and the kind of animals making up the teams are contradictory in the many narratives extant.

What Abraham Lincoln himself said relating to their trip to Illinois in anecdotes, incidents and hardships is probably the only abso-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

lutely reliable information we have. Dennis Hanks lived long enough to have made a complete and reliable narrative of the trip, but for some reason none exists. However, it seems the families started on March 1st, and reached John Hanks' place in about sixteen days, with not less than two wagons and most likely three. At least one of the teams were oxen, while the others may have been horses. The names of Abraham's oxen were "Tom and Jerry," as told us by one living relative of the families, the granddaughter of Squire Hall.

Thomas Lincoln's new farm was about eight miles west and south of Decatur on the north bank of the Sangamon River, and required about 180 miles of difficult roads to reach it. About eleven miles per day was all that could be negotiated, or a little more than one mile per hour actual traveling time. We have followed what is now supposed to be the old Lincoln trail, but we have our doubts as to the correctness of the route as marked in many places, because of the many square and abrupt turns and straight stretches for miles. Our knowledge of old trails in country not so primitive as that which the Lincolns had to travel tells us that the early pioneer roads followed paths of least resistance, generally laid out by buffalo or Indians long before the ox-team. Their trip to Illinois was before the straight roads with square turns. In 1942, we traveled the same supposed trail from the Spencer cabin site to the cabin site on the Sangamon River in one afternoon at reasonable speed. In Illinois, when they came to the Embarrass River, according to a family tradition, the caravan was de-

THE MOVE TO ILLINOIS

tained for two days on account of high water. Seven years afterward Thomas Lincoln settled on his last farm (his fourth Illinois farm) about a half mile west of this river crossing, where he died in 1851.

Thomas Lincoln had passed the prime of his life when the move to Illinois was made. He was then fifty-four years old while his wife was forty-one. No cabin was waiting for the family, according to John Hanks, but logs--prepared by John Hanks--were on the ground ready to be laid up for the cabin. This procedure, if the meager records are reliable, placed the Lincolns in their new Illinois home about March 18, 1830.

How many moved into the new cabin with the Lincolns is only conjectural, but Abe and his step-brother were certainly two; while it is not unlikely that Squire Hall, his wife and baby also moved in with Thomas Lincoln. Dennis Hanks and family, it is thought, moved to a place southwest of the Lincoln house about a half mile.

This home proved to be satisfactory to Thomas Lincoln for only one year; at the end of which he had sold out and was retracing his steps over the land he had come only the year before to a new location about ten miles south of Mattoon in Coles County. This new home called by the Lincolns "Buck Grove" received its name because the skeletons of two ancient bucks had been found there. They were locked together and had "died that way."

"Buck Grove" was a home for three years when it was sold and another farm of eighty acres bought, three or four miles southeast, still in Coles County and still retracing almost his

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

identical steps as he came from Indiana. This farm was moved to in 1834, and was known in the family as "Mud Point." Surely this place was as appropriately named as was "Buck Grove."

This also was a three year home, as, according to the tablet now marking the site, it was sold in 1837, when the Lincolns again back-tracked and settled near the Embarrass River crossing which had delayed them because of high water seven years before when they were on their way from Indiana.

This last farm, also eighty acres, is said in the family tradition to have received the name which is still used: "Goose Nest Prairie Farm." It was so called because of its situation in a hollow-like formation which resembles a great goose nest of probably a mile in diameter. Having visited all of these cabin sites we have no hesitancy in saying that of all the four homes Thomas Lincoln occupied after coming to Illinois, the one on the Sangamon River would be our first choice, while the "Goose Nest" would be our second. While all the four farms now are fairly well improved and have accessible roads, back in the thirties when no improvements had yet come to that new country, the Sangamon River by the first farm and the Embarrass River by the last would certainly have been pleasing contrasts to the everlasting black mud surrounding the "Buck Grove" and the "Mud Point" farms.

Abraham Lincoln, though a bachelor until 1842 did not live with his parents in any of these Illinois cabins with the exceptions of visits of sometimes several weeks duration. The first year, 1830, however, he did help in es-

THE MOVE TO ILLINOIS

tablishing the new home by building the house, fencing, and breaking up some ground. This information is supplied by John Hanks, who, in 1860 (it is remembered) carried rails from this farm which he and Abraham had made, into the Republication Convention in Decatur, making a historical political incident. This gave the Republicans, as said by Indiana's Senator Henry S. Lane in the nominating speech in the Chicago Convention, the "Dead Wood" on the Democrats in the campaign which followed.

In March, 1831, the future President accompanied by his step-brother, John D. Johnston, stepped into a canoe and paddled down on the flood waters of the Sangamon River which ended as his second trip to New Orleans, to a new home in New Salem, to Springfield, and to the Presidency.

While Thomas Lincoln moved four different times in the seven years immediately following his entry into Illinois, it may be of some interest to connect some of the historic incidents in Abraham's life to the particular cabin which he called his home when the incident occurred: for instance, when Abe and John D. Johnston returned from their New Orleans trip in 1831, it was to the new home of Thomas Lincoln on the Buck Grove farm. They, with their boss, Offutt, had come up from New Orleans on the steamer, walked to Edwardsville, separated from Offutt, he going to Springfield, and they to the Buck Grove farm. Presumably they knew when they returned that the new home would be fifteen or twenty miles southeast from the Sangamon River farm from which they had departed in March.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Abraham had arranged to meet Offutt in New Salem in the following August where he was to start the Offutt store; goods had been bought, but a wait of several weeks was necessary for them to arrive. While the baby John J. Hall, who will be remembered as the year-old infant making the move with the Lincolns, was only two years old when Lincoln and Johnston walked in from their New Orleans trip, he is responsible for the following quotations, which he told to Mrs. Gridley in 1893.

"Now do ye want to know how Uncle Abe got his strength?" "Why he got it splittin' rails. Ye knowed it wuz down in Illinois near Decatur, and at Buck Grove and Muddy Point that Uncle Abe used to do most of his rail splittin'. Never no tree wuz too hard for him to tackle. They'd jest topple right over when Uncle Abe would chop. He never minded choppin' trees, nor splittin' rails nor nothin'; nor no kind of work, though one time I remember he did say that the hardest work he hed ever done which worried him most wuz when he loaded a boat with a wheel barrer. It puzzled him awfully to keep the barrer on the plank, and to catch holt of the handles, and to run it up hurt him mighty. I reckon it wuz because he wuz so tall."

It is entirely reasonable to believe every word of this narrative of John Hall, for on each of the farms named by him, Lincoln built a cabin in the timber, and rails were about the first order of the day in any new settlement. So, since the Buck Grove farm cabin had scarcely been erected when Abe and Johnston came home from New Orleans; and, as Hall says, "Uncle Abe never minded splittin' rails, nor choppin' trees,

THE MOVE TO ILLINOIS

nor nothin'" what was to prevent him from lending a helping hand to his father while waiting for the Offutt goods to arrive at New Salem?

Here at Buck Grove the Dan Needham scrap took place which is often related in Lincoln biographies. Needham lived only a few miles west at a small place called Wabash Point on the little Wabash River in Coles County. John Hall was about four years old when the Needham bully met up with his Uncle Abe and probably describes the match more from what he was told than what he might remember, but he tells it this way: "Ye want to know if Uncle Abe wuz strong enough to tackle anything or lick anybody, do ye? Wall, I'd low that didn't consarn him, for Uncle Abe could tackle anything, and once on a time Uncle Abe and Dan Needham rasled britches holdt and Uncle Abe throwed Dan two times and then he says, says he, 'Lets quit,' cause he didn't want to hurt Dan's feelins. Why, grandpap hisself was allus a braggin about how limber Abe wus; how he could stand with his hands in his pockets and bend over and tech the back of his head to the ground, right level ground, tu."

This farm was the home Abe returned to from the Black Hawk War, probably in July of 1832. He returned to New Salem in time to campaign some before the election for the Legislature, at which election he was defeated. However, it was at the Mud Point cabin home Lincoln came to at the time of the death of Ann Rutledge in 1835. This, and the Black Hawk War visit mentioned above will be again referred to later.

Coincidentally, and before leaving the Mud Point home, one more item may be mentioned. On

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

February 12, 1943, early in the morning over the radio came this in faltering voice. "My name is Henry C. Allison, and I am 92 years old. I have lived in Coles County, Illinois, all my life near the little village of Trilla. My father lived in this locality before me. He was a blacksmith and his shop was close to the home of Thomas Lincoln who lived at a place locally known as Mud Point. 'Uncle Tommy' Lincoln was known as a good man; he was a blacksmith as well as a farmer and worked for my father off and on in the shop all the time he lived at Mud Point. When 'Uncle Tommy' moved from Mud Point he went over about five miles east and bought what is known as the Goose Nest Prairie farm where he lived until he died in 1851."

This bit of information and incidental praise for "Uncle Tommy" Lincoln came to us while this chapter was under construction so, with many thanks to our unknown friend, Uncle Henry Allison, we take the liberty to record his story of Uncle Tommy Lincoln, the blacksmith. We must admit that this news from the radio is our first evidence that Thomas Lincoln had ever practiced the blacksmith trade. Some writer said that Abraham Lincoln considered the blacksmith trade as a profession once in his life. At the time his father was living at Mud Point, 1834-1837, Abraham was said to be wavering in New Salem over a life profession. Possibly it was on his visit home at the time of Ann Rutledge's death that he found his father working in Mr. Allison's shop that the trade suggested itself to him, which was in September, 1835. An admittedly far-fetched possibility.

Chapter Nine

THE LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

In the early part of 1942 we made a visit to the Lincoln Country in the Goose Nest Farm locality where we made the acquaintance of some of the remaining living relatives of the Lincolns, Hankes, Johnstons, and Halls. We relate the original story almost word for word:

About 2 A.M. Sunday, April 12, 1942, we set out on a mission which surprisingly wound up at the Lincoln Park eight miles south of Charleston, Illinois. At Rockville, Indiana, we stopped at the first filling station we found open that early in the morning, and secured an Illinois map. On other trips to Decatur we had often consulted maps to discover where this State Park was situated but none until this one contained the information. Since we were familiar with about every other locality made famous by Lincoln in some way or another during his great and historic career, we immediately decided that this day would not pass without a visit to this long hidden historic farm.

A perfect day was promised, neither too hot nor too cold, and good roads were indicated on the map. We arrived at Charleston about 9 A.M. Passing through to the southwest we soon came to signs on a newly constructed black-top road which indicated that the Lincoln State Park was

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ahead of us. In another fifteen or twenty minutes we came to the north outskirts of a small village and on the right hand or west side of the road an enclosure of about an acre was designated by a large sign as "The Moore House." The acre belonged to Illinois as a State Park and was a part of the Lincoln State Park.

The little village proved to be Farmington, a place of fifty or more people, but having signs of at some earlier time being considerably larger. Stopping at one of two little stores, more for plying some questions than for the small purchases we made, we got the first bit of local lore concerning the Lincolns--to us a new sensation, for always before everything we learned of Lincoln came from books.

In answer to our questions we were told by an old gentleman and his daughter that the house we were inquiring about was where Lincoln was entertained on the evening he came to visit his step-mother after he was elected President. This new Lincoln lore coming from tongue to ear was, that Lincoln, passing on through Farmington on his way down to the old cabin about a mile south of the village, had met his step-mother walking up the road towards the Moore place, but did not recognize her. He was driving two horses to a buggy, having obtained them at Charleston where he had stayed overnight, and eaten breakfast with his cousin, Dennis Hanks, and family. A notable storm had occurred on the evening before this visit of Lincoln: The streams overflowed and the wind blew the top off the flue of Mrs. Lincoln's cabin.

On the way out from Charleston the Kickapoo River is crossed, and Lincoln experienced quite

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

a lot of trouble in getting over the stream because of the swollen condition due to the deluge of the day before. The new road and new bridge at this stream today gives the conditions quite a different appearance from the old road, which still shows traces of passing through a low stretch of valley before reaching the stream proper. This part of the old road no doubt was overflowing when Lincoln drove out to the old home on that February morning in 1861.

With this new information in our minds we drove on down the road toward the Lincoln cabin, which was about a mile. All the while we were conscious that we were traveling over the same ground that Lincoln had on his numerous trips home from New Salem and later from Springfield after taking up law. Earlier than this he was familiar with this country because he had passed through it on his way to their new home near Decatur when his father came back to this farm. It will be remembered it was near here that they tarried at the Embarrass River due to high water.

We could almost feel the presence of Lincoln, although there had been more than a hundred years between us and the twenty-one year old young man we could see in our minds, in various moods, standing, walking, studying, and driving an ox-team to--to where no other man dreamed--the White House.

In this mood we passed on south out of Farmington and where about half way to where we expected to find the cabin when we noticed on a picket fence in front of a small cottage on the left side of the road some signboards with inscriptions so small that we were required to

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

stop the car to read them. To our surprise, time reversed, for there in front of the cottage door stood, not the apparition of Lincoln, but Lincoln himself in flesh and blood, not "walking here at midnight," but standing there at 10 A.M. in broad daylight.

The man was about forty-five years old, a little stooped but still tall, with whiskers, eyes, and features such as to duplicate any of Lincoln's photographs now in existence. It was a weird feeling that struck us, and it really took some time to realize that we were not seeing into a spirit world. His first greeting helped but little to break the spell, for when he spoke he said, "Howdy, folks." We completely ignored the inscriptions on the fence, for here was an opportunity to talk to Lincoln in person three-quarters of a century after his assassination.

We were not deceived into believing that we were seeing and talking to Abe Lincoln himself. The proof was soon forthcoming, for he said as much. His real name is Clarence Thomas Hall, but he is locally known as "Abe the Second." He is spoken of by his mother as "Abe" and also by all his friends and neighbors. Still half believing that the man we saw and were speaking to must be an apparition, we were brought soon to realization when a voice came from inside the door saying: "Come on in folks, God bless ye." We remember replying, "Thank you," but still rather mystified by Abe the Second. We did not immediately accept the invitation of the voice from the inside, until Abe said, "Mother wants you to come in." This we did and were met by a slender old lady who was partly

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

gray-haired and wore a very old-fashioned long skirted dress of common material.

She gave her age as seventy-three and said: "I was born in the Lincoln cabin October 18, 1869, and I lived in it till Friday, March 14, 1891. It was built by Thomas Lincoln and his son Abe Lincoln in 1831 and my great-grandmother Sarah Bush Lincoln lived and made her home in this cabin with her grandson John J. Hall and his family eighteen years until her death December 14, 1869. She rocked me in the cradle when I was a baby and I just liked four days abein two months old when she died and Abraham Lincoln lived and made his home in this cabin here on this farm till his twenty-first birthday." This was her first introduction to us. She wrote us afterward the identical information with no capital I's, no periods and few commas, but with some capitals in various places.

This is the Nancy A. Hall we have spoken of, the daughter of the baby John who came in the wagon along with the Lincolns to Illinois in 1830.

At the time of this lengthy introduction we remember trying to tell her that we were interested very much in her son because of his great resemblance to President Lincoln. She came right back with a flourish: "Sure, he's my son; god, honey, he is the second Abe, he's the man, god yes, honey," and went right on to tell how he was related to the Hankes, Johnstons and Lincolns all by blood connection.

Our interest, in spite of the mother's interruptions, was in this man. It certainly is more than a mere happen-so when the resemblance of this man to Lincoln is considered. And now

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

it appears, after long investigation, that through the Hanks blood, and not the Lincoln, this man certainly acquired his wonderful resemblance to the President. It was also discovered that his grandfather before him, John J. Hall, carried this same remarkable resemblance to the President. Earlier in this history it will be recalled, Levi Hall, Abe the Second's great-great-grandfather married Nancy Hanks (a sister to Nancy Lincoln's father) and this is undoubtedly the source of the blood relationship between this man and the President.

The rapid fire sketch of the Lincoln family which Nancy had just given us was not entirely without mistakes, some of which we were aware of at the time. Since then we have verified her claims by investigations and found that in the main she was correct; but as to dates, in error.

Our resolution to revisit this interesting country came even before our first trip was over, came as much from an unsatisfied longing to see more of Nancy and Abe as to see again the country over which the Lincoln family and their relatives had lived their lives. These two people, Nancy and her son Abe, we regarded as about the last remnants of that race of early pioneers from which Lincoln's bed rock simplicity, honesty, and even his physical characteristics were made of.

On later trips we learned that Abe the Second was born July 10, 1899, and his rightful name is Clarence Thomas. Once, while visiting the Shiloh Cemetery Nancy told us confidentially that after her husband had died, she took up again her maiden name, Hall. She preferred this

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

to Thomas, and, to avoid as much as possible inevitable tongue wagging, she used the boy's name as his middle name, resulting in the name he now goes by, Clarence Thomas Hall. It seems hardly worth while for the trouble though, for not a single acquaintance of his which we met on our rounds ever addressed him in any other style than, "Why, hello, Abe." After she had confided to us her reason for the name transmutation it instantly occurred to us that a way back in the line of this woman's ancestors another Nancy's mother may have had some similar view in her own troubled experiences which are still baffling the genealogists of today. Now we wonder if name changing at will is a family trait? A trait which may crop out every few centuries? What a stumblingblock this act of Nancy's might have placed in the line of descent should her posterity go on down through the years.

All through the many biographies of Abraham Lincoln are found references to him as "queer" at times, "mentally off," and at one time in his life was said to be "insane." Whatever the justification for opinions such as these for Lincoln in his lifetime, certainly they do not injure his fame now; and since our acquaintance with Abe the Second, we have some reason to believe that that part of Lincoln's life which earned for him the questionable titles as above, may have come from an inherited predisposition which it was impossible to avoid. Whether Abe the Second can be placed under the same predisposition for the inheritance of that sort of family trait, we can, with due respect say that he is "very odd."

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

His facial expressions--humble, sad, pleasant, innocent--afforded continual interest because they were so unusually strange. His actions were peculiar and unexpected. He walked with a swaying motion of arms and shoulders which we feel was peculiar to the President, an inherited family trait. He seemed to act by sudden impulse. He would be seen standing as though in the deepest study, when suddenly he would dart to another place for no apparent reason and assume the same thoughtful attitude. At the graveyard his mother wished to find the graves of certain relatives. Abe looked for them independent of the rest of us. He was here and there in what we thought was true Lincoln fashion, sometimes posing as a statue of his famous relative unconsciously as though proclaiming the greatest speech in the English language, the Gettysburg Address. Another glance, and he would be seen down on all fours, clearing the grass away and peering closely in order to read the inscription on a marble slab. Once he stopped long enough to carve his initials on a tree in the cemetery. All this time his mother kept up a constant chatter of "Don't do that, Abe," as though he were a child, then to us she would say, "God bless him." Abe paid very little attention to his attentive mother, but kept right on with his "queer" actions, soon locating the lost gravestones. We asked both Nancy and Abe to stand by the graves of Thomas Lincoln and his wife Sarah to have their pictures taken. Unlike our friend Harry Crawford, they did this like veterans.

A few feet northwest of the graves of the Lincolns Nancy looked in vain for the markers

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

at the graves of her grandfather and grandmother, Squire Hall and wife. She seemed positive as to where the graves should be, but nothing marked them but two uninscribed native slabs of sandstone which caused an outburst of indignation on Nancy's part, as she had believed the markers were more modern in design. Instantly she came to the conclusion that some one had stolen the better stones and replaced them with the common red sandstones. It just had to be that way. "Ain't it awful how people steal, what did they want with them gravestones, anyway, god, they'll pay up for it some day, ain't it awful." On another trip to Illinois later, we found the grave of her grandfather Hall in about three feet of the northeast corner of the fence surrounding the Lincoln graves. It developed that her grandmother, who had married a Moore for her second husband was buried where she thought the stones had been stolen, by his side, and not by the side of her grandfather, Squire Hall.

Nevertheless, within a few square yards there lay in that Shiloh Cemetery the remains of five of the thirteen members of the most historic and notable migratory caravan ever to take place in the history of the United States: that of the Lincolns to Illinois in March of the year 1830. In this small space lie the remains of Thomas Lincoln, Sarah Bush Lincoln, Squire Hall, Matilda J. Hall (Moore), and John J. Hall, the latter our friend Nancy's father. Thomas Lincoln died in 1851, his wife Sarah in 1869, Squire Hall in 1851, his wife in 1878, and John J. Hall in 1909.

Nancy Hall tells us that her father, of all

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

of Lincoln's relations was his favorite of the younger relatives. The fact that John J. was the baby in the Lincoln wagon on the way to Illinois would seem to verify her statement along with other facts.

At the time John D. Johnston was about to violate his agreement whereby he was to care for his mother during her remaining lifetime for the "east forty" of the Thomas Lincoln farm (Johnston was to have it at his mother's death, but not before) Lincoln's protest letter to Johnston became notable for its defense of his step-mother. The Johnston letter was dated November 25, 1851, ten months after his mother had become a widow. At that time John J. Hall was twenty-two years old and began taking care of his grandmother, according to his daughter Nancy, living with her as a single man until April 10, 1866, when he married a widow, Mrs. Elizabeth (Taylor) Gaston. Mrs. Lincoln died three years after Hall's marriage. There were six children born to the Halls, and our friend Nancy was third, born as she says, lacking "four days a-bein two months" before her grandmother passed away in 1869. Hall continued to live in the Lincoln cabin until 1891, when one room was bought and exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago as The Lincoln Cabin. Hall became the owner of the eighty-acre Thomas Lincoln farm by the purchase of Johnston's rights for a consideration of fifty dollars. Johnston, failing to follow out his contract with Lincoln to care for his mother while she lived, let the land legally fall into the hands of Robert Lincoln as the only heir after his father's assassination. This gave Hall considerable worry until

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

he was assured by a letter from Robert Lincoln that he made no claims whatever on the place, and for him not to be disturbed about his title.

The above explanation is the result of the famous Lincoln to Johnston letter as Nancy now recites it.

John J. Hall made his home with his daughter Nancy and her son, after his wife's death until he died in 1909. With tears in her eyes she described the death of her father, and her prophesy she made a week before it occurred: "Pap had his hair cut on Friday, and I said, 'Pap, you oughten't a done it, you'l die fore a week,' and he did." Then she named the day and hour and the corner of the room his bed was in when it occurred.

We have mentioned Nancy as mistaken in her dates quite often when relating her set stories of the Lincoln families. She seemed most confused as to the date of the Lincoln's arrival and the building of the cabin on the Goose Nest Prairie farm in which she was born, believing it to be in 1831. It was on our second trip to the Lincoln country that we visited the Shiloh graveyard with Nancy and Abe. While we were familiar with the Buck Grove and Mud Point cabin sites of the Thomas Lincoln homes of 1831 and 1834 respectively, neither Nancy nor Abe seemed to be. Completing our stop at the graveyard we drove west a few miles until we came to the Mud Point markers which had been placed there by the Historical Society of Coles County some years ago. Here we stopped to read that at this place Thomas Lincoln built a cabin three hundred feet northeast of this marker in 1834. Nancy seemed completely bewildered, for how

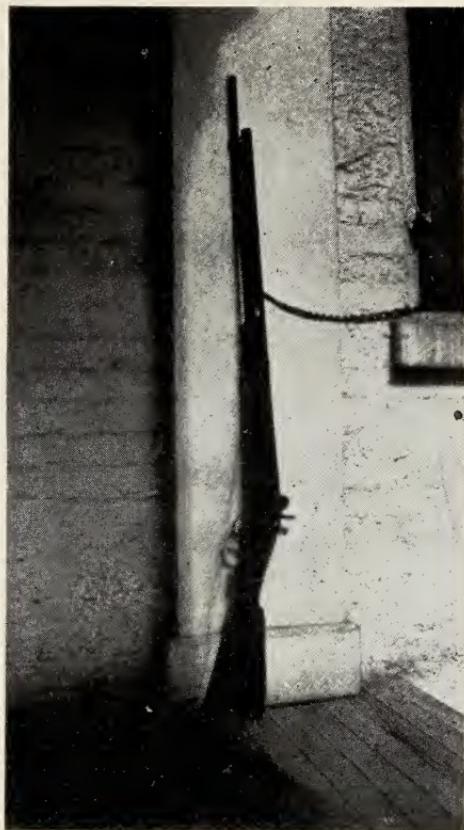
DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

could he build a cabin at this place when she knew he had never lived at any other place after moving to Illinois except in the cabin in which she was born? We went on still farther west until we came to the Buck Grove cabin site. Here the marker said that Thomas Lincoln built a cabin about twenty rods north of this marker and lived here until 1834. Here Nancy seemed about "floored," and yet she recalled that her father had brought her on a trip to see this spot along with Mrs. Gridley when that lady was a visitor in their home in 1893. She said the old cabin was still standing at that time, but Nancy remained silenced and completely mystified the balance of the trip so far as those two cabins were concerned. She could not give up the idea that she had been mixed in her dates all her life without more proof. We suggested that the authorities had consulted the Coles County records surely before placing those markers at the cabin sites, but Nancy showed plainly that something must be wrong and it could not be she. Abe said: "Mother, they wouldn't put them things up that way if they hadn't looked up the records, if they did they shouldn't a-done it." Nancy still protested by a short silence, very short. One letter received from Nancy since that trip to the cabin sites still maintains that Thomas and Abe Lincoln built her old birthplace cabin home in 1831.

Returning from our trip it was suggested by Nancy that we go back through the little town of Lerna and call on "Old Man Gray who had bought 'taters of Pap lots of times when we lived at the cabin." Abe protested a little at



Nancy A. Hall and son, "Abe the Second," taken at the first Thomas Lincoln monument at Shiloh Church in Illinois.



Musket used by Abraham Lincoln in Black Hawk War, 1832.

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

this suggestion, but since it was on our way back we did stop. Old Man Gray was about eighty years old, pleasant, small, and active. He was quite talkative, but it seemed that Nancy's prompting failed to bring out much more than the fact that he had bought "taters" often of her father while they lived at the cabin, preferring to talk of Miami, Florida, where he had spent several winters.

We never studied characteristics more intensely than on this trip with Nancy and Abe, if actions, facial expressions, looks, words and their combinations to express ideas come under that term. The look on Abe's face, naturally sad, humble and pleasant, with a constant readiness to smile, made us feel that Lincoln himself was riding with us. His conversation consisted of what he could insert between the almost constant flow of that of his mother as she kept relating stories of her hard life, such as: "Yes sir, I god, when I wus a girl I worked out on the farm with Pap, drove our big Clyde horses; Pap always had the best horses in the whole country, and I drove 'em; drove 'em to the plow and wagon, hauled wood and manure and everything, dug 'taters, yes sir, and we had the best 'taters in Coles County; shucked corn and helped Pap do everything there wus to do; yes sir honey, I done it, I aint a lyin, I done it, an' I kin do it again if I didn't have this here nuritus in my left shoulder, yes sir, honey, I aint a lyin, I done it." And then, as if referring to pain she would say: "god, aint it awful?"

Nancy would tell of some of her personal accomplishments, how she learned to play the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

violin; how her brother had brought an old violin home, but it had no strings. One day she made strings by twisting thread to its proper size for the strings she needed, then astonishing the folks by soon learning to play, and winning a bet. She also plays the French harp, and one invitation is all that is necessary for her to demonstrate the fact to your satisfaction. She quotes poetry and tells stories "to beat the band." She will give Abe orders to repeat the Gettysburg Address, but keeps right on talking, not giving him a chance to do it.

Mrs. Gridley quotes Nancy at the age of twenty-two in language but little different to that of her present day use. Quoting her she says: "Asking Sis to come out into the cool, fresh air, she twisted herself about on one foot, and turning her face away, and she said, 'I haint got no time for foolin, Paw said I must git some good vittals for the city folks.'" There were many such references to "Sis" which makes it plain that Nancy's schooldays were no more numerous than those of the average member of the Lincoln relatives wherever we find them quoted. Certainly Nancy is typical of all those whom Lincoln referred to when he "reckoned the simple annals of the poor" appraised his family history sufficient for all purposes.

Nancy's stories covered many subjects, and, like an experienced story-teller each story related suggested and called for another.

Returning to their cottage a little after noon from our morning trip we prepared for a lunch, which we ate out on the platform by the well. Nancy had been to Charleston the day before, and, having knowledge that we were to be

LINCOLN COUNTRY IN ILLINOIS

over the next day, had prepared for the occasion. Coffee, fried chicken and cake were the main items on the menu. In all the hundreds of stories we have read which concerned Lincoln the first, we have never seen one which indicated that fried chicken was more than ordinary meat to him. But, if fondness for that fowl is any indication of relationship, then Abe the Second is far removed from the President. Not a scrap of chicken of the three in stock was left after the lunch, and Abe was careful to save all the scraps for the animal which he had cooped up in the adjoining kitchen. It barked like a dog, but raved and snarled and growled like a lion. This caged animal was proof, as we afterward learned, that these folks lived in constant dread of thieves.

Eating proved no handicap to Nancy's line of conversation, and her thirty missing teeth no handicap to her eating, for she still had two, about an inch apart and prominently displayed. She explained that she kept the two teeth because of some superstition which involved wisdom. She was probably right, for they certainly would be as valuable for that as for eating. Both Nancy and Abe seemed to enjoy this Sunday lunch, but so did we. The forenoon trip and the noon lunch with these folks made us feel that we had deeply penetrated into the home life of the pioneer Lincolns, Halls, Hankses, and Johnstons.

Chapter Ten

THE LINCOLN RELICS

On our previous trip to the Lincoln country in Illinois, when we accidentally discovered these two people, and before we went away this time Nancy brought out a few keepsakes to show us. She said these came to her from her father. One of these relics was a common plain white table plate which she claimed was brought out of Kentucky when the Lincolns moved to Indiana in 1816, and belonged to Lincoln's own mother. Immediately we thought of an item of a purchase by Thomas Lincoln in Kentucky, "January 15, 1807. Purchased at sale of Thomas McIntire, dish and plates for \$2.68, basin and spoons \$3.24." Could it be one of those old plates? She told us that the plate had been carefully preserved by Lincoln's step-mother, and at all his visits home she would set the plate for him at the table. It was at Mrs. Lincoln's request that the plate be kept for Nancy, the then youngest baby of John J. Hall, until she grew up. The plate had every appearance of being old enough for her story to be true. We said, "Mrs. Hall, will you sell that old plate and swear that the story you tell about it is true?" She said right back to us: "God, honey, I wouldn't lie, the Lincolns never lie, I wouldn't be kin to 'em if I did." We offered her a small

THE LINCOLN RELICS

sum for it, still not expecting her to part with it at any price, when, to our surprise, she indicated that a fair offer might buy it. We then doubled our offer, and with a little hesitancy she gave it to us at the last figure.

We wondered why she had kept all these articles so long, and just at this particular time decided to part with them. One article was a limestone rock about two by nine inches which has carved on it the name: "A, L, LINCOLN" with both N's made backward. A study of this carving leads us to believe that Lincoln first cut his initials on the rock, then later decided to finish with his full name, the additional room on the stone being of sufficient length. For two reasons we believe the work was done in Indiana: one, that limestone such as the specimen might be found easily in Spencer County in creek bottoms. The other reason, that the faulty lettering indicates early attempts of a youth in the use of the alphabet.

Nancy parted with this relic at the same price of the plate. We considered the boyish errors in the carving as giving the piece of rock almost a priceless value, which gave us the feeling of taking advantage of her. Again we wondered why she had kept all those relics until this time, and then decided to part with them. This time we said, "Mrs. Hall, you have told us that your father had sold lots of things to those Chicago fellows, including a hundred rails made by Lincoln for ten dollars apiece. Why, then, did he keep all these things you are now showing us?" "Why, honey, grandmother wanted him to keep these things for me. He kept these things hid; nobody node he had 'em." Tak-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ing a tin box out of an old trunk she opened it and removed a small poke with some old pieces of money. "See this old one-cent piece with a hole in it? Uncle Abe give it to Pap when he come back to see grandmother after he was President. This old knife, too, he give it to Pap at the same time. Pap had that old money under his pillow when he died, and he told me to keep it after he wus dead, and I did. God bless him, he wus a good man. Grandmother loved Pap, he wus so good to her."

The large one-cent piece which she said was a watch charm Lincoln had given her father was dated 1835. There were two other large cent pieces, one dated 1848, the other 1851. A battered two-cent piece had an indistinct date of 1814.

The story of the watch charm and the knife is: when Lincoln visited his step-mother before leaving Springfield for Washington for his inauguration in February, 1861, he drove to her house as mentioned in another part of this story and found John Hall on top of the cabin fixing the flue. Nancy gave us a copy of the story as her father told it, which we here repeat: "Jest the day afore Uncle Abe come up, the chimney fell down, and I hed to take grandmarm over to my mother's house; she wus married agin and livin' down to Farmington then. (Her name was now Moore, it will be remembered.) Wall, that mornin' when I wus fixin' up the chimney who should drive up to the yard and holler out but Uncle Abe, the President of the United States. He got out of the buggy jest as natural and shock hands and asked after all the relations, but when he found grandmarm gone he said, said

THE LINCOLN RELICS

he, 'Come boys, let's all git into the buggy and go over there'; which we did; but before we started Uncle Abe looked the house over and said, 'It looks jest like it always did,' and then he called me to one side and whispered in my ear, and pointing up with his right hand he said, 'O, my god, John, once the old cabin, now the White House.'

"After a bit he went out into the yard and Uncle Abe picked up a piece of scantling and ast for an axe. Then he chopped it in two and took out his pocket knife and cut two large letters, 'T.L.', and said, 'I'm goin' to drive these down at father's head and feet.' Then we went over to the graveyard about two miles away where grandpap Lincoln wus buried and Uncle Abe placed them, one at the head, tother at the feet. Frum there we driv over to Farmington where grandmarm Lincoln wus and took dinner with the folks. When we went into the house and grandmarm seed him she began to cry, and said, 'They'l murder you, Abe, and I'll never git to see you no more.'" Nancy adds to this story that when Lincoln drove up to the cabin he had got out of the buggy and was tying his horses to the rail fence when her father first saw him from the top of the cabin.

Family tradition also brings down the story that when it became known that the President-elect had come to see his mother, and that he was in Farmington at the Moores, the school was dismissed in order that the children might have a chance to see him. It is also related that he told a story to the women who had gathered to help Mrs. Moore with the dinner: He first asked them the question, "How would you

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ladies go about making a fire if all the matches should be taken away and none could be had?" Then he told how his own father used to start fires when he was a boy by striking sparks with a piece of steel. The sparks were directed into a pan with dry rotten wood with a sprinkle of powder which would catch fire from the spark.

John Hall is authority for saying that one of the ladies at the dinner "took Uncle Abe's eye." Hall never disclosed whether he himself had noticed this attachment, or whether Uncle Abe told him afterward. It might have been that Mr. Hall was there with a jealous eye himself, for he was thirty-two years old and unmarried, while Abe was fifty-two, had been married thirteen years and had three children.

When Nancy gave the traditional family version of the Lincoln visit to see his step-mother she told how Pap got down off the cabin when he saw Lincoln and went to meet him, etc., but when she got to the place where Lincoln made the markers for his father's grave she referred to them as "staubs," which we presume was the old family name for stakes. These she said Lincoln sharpened off and then took his pocket knife, which we have referred to, and cut his father's initials on them. Then he "staubed" them down at the grave. After the initials were cut, he gave the knife to her father for a keepsake, also the old watch charm penny which Nancy said she had often heard her father value at a great sum of money.

In all our dealings and acquaintance with the Halls we have never detected one instance where either of them intentionally meant to

THE LINCOLN RELICS

mistake or deceive us. One instance will demonstrate the truth of this assertion.

On a second visit we arrived at Nancy and Abe's cottage home about four in the afternoon. Just as we came up a number of other visitors went into the house ahead of us, so we were of the same crowd, so far as Nancy knew. It soon became evident that neither recognized us. Nancy, as usual was reciting her set speech about the Lincolns, Halls, and Hankses, and then began to tell of the relics which her great-grandmother had saved for her, etc. Finally she mentioned the plate which we had purchased of her on our previous visit, saying she had kept it until a week or so ago, when she sold it to an Indiana man. We happened to be the man, but if she had been dishonest, there was no reason why she could not have shown another plate with the same story around it, and possibly sold it for as much or more than the original one brought her. We had no reason to disbelieve her story before, but when we heard this story under circumstances which allowed deception, we thought that even the remnants of the Lincoln family still possess the characteristics which gave Lincoln the deserved title of "Honest Abe."

We had in our several visits kept a list of all the relics which Nancy possessed that had come down to her through her father from her great-grandmother. We also arrived at the conclusion from a great many remarks we had heard her make that they might be purchased. There were several reasons we believed for their wish to dispose of them: one, their fear of theft. Another, the mother wished to convert them to cash for her son's use after her death rather

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

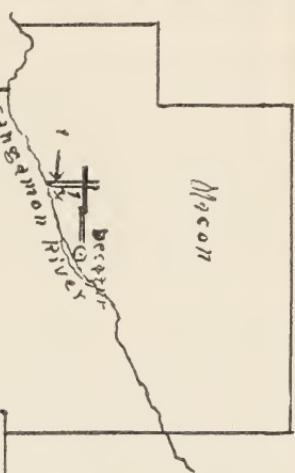
than leave the relics to him. But, the primary reason which seemed to carry the greatest incentive to dispose of them was the fact that each of them believed that the authorities had failed miserably to recognize them as of any importance around the Lincoln State Park. Their treatment was mentioned by them a hundred times as "terrible." No doubt but the origin of their feud with the State was at the time it took over the land for park purposes. They still nursed their ill-feelings, and both mother and son, with magnified grievance are doing nothing which might be beneficial to their enemies. So they wished the relics out of their reach.

Two brothers and one sister had heired the farm with Nancy and the State had been successful in obtaining all the divisions but her twenty acres containing the cottage in which she lives. Several times she referred to these transfers, each time with bitter criticism of her relatives and also the State representatives who had made the purchases.

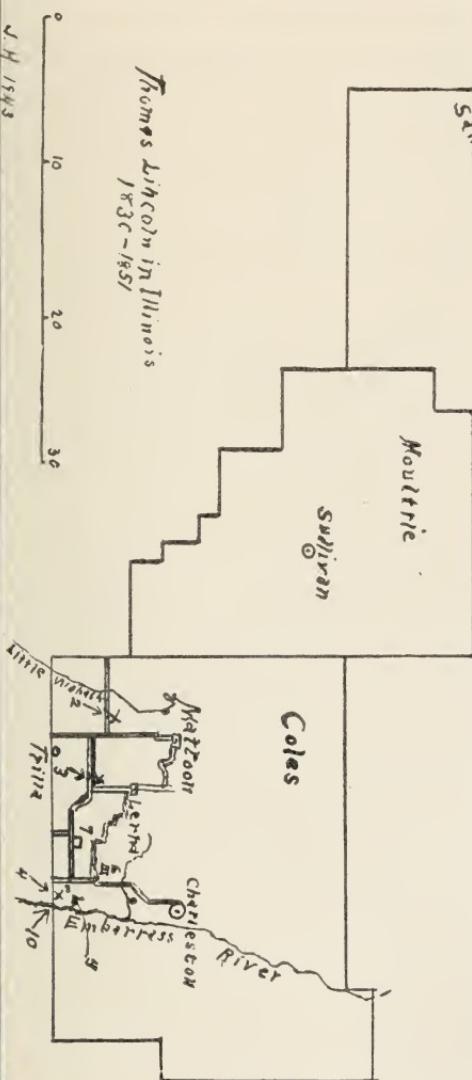
She would criticise the State management of the park, and speak with derision of the "line" of Lincoln lore the caretaker gives out to the public. "He tells the people the cabin is jist like it wus when the Lincolns lived there, I know it ain't, fer I wus born there and lived in it eighteen years, an' it ain't. Them logs wus cut right back here in this grove (pointing east to a grove) and Abe wus back there and seen im cuttin em and seen em haulin em up to build that east room. It don't do em no good to lie. We'd tell em the truth."

One of the articles obtained from Nancy was the ox-yoke ring which the Lincolns used on

Map
3



1 First Home of Thomas Lincoln 1807-1831
2 2nd Home at "Nunes" 1831 To 1834 "Nuck's Grove"
3 By 1834 "Horn" 1834 To 1837 "Horn" & "Tall" &
4 "Lath."
5 Home of Nancy Hall and Abe Th. 1837
6 The Haar House in Farmington Village.
7 Shiloh Church Graves of Thomas & other emigrants
& his wife where Sam Neelton lived.
8 Hickapo Creek
9 Where the Lincolns crossed the Embarrass River 1830



J. H. 1943

THE LINCOLN RELICS

their trip to Illinois. In writing about it afterward she said: "That old ox-yoke a-hangin' up on that old cabin is Old Billy Balch's yoke." In this last statement she has reference to a yoke now hanging on the north outside wall of the old cabin. It is disgusting to her to think the caretaker will allow the public to believe the yoke once belonged to the Lincolns. "And they pay that feller there twelve hundred dollars a year. I tell ye, honey, its a shame the way they done us. We'd tell the truth....ain't it awful."

On the day of the porch lunch we broached the purchase of the relics. We had indicated in a letter of a few days before that we might buy them all if she was really wanting to dispose of them, and offered a figure we believed reasonable.

The list she had given as in her possession consisted of an old looking-glass Nancy claimed was once the property of the President's mother before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, a plow made in Kentucky by Thomas Lincoln, the garden hoe used by Lincoln's step-mother until she died, a square tin box which we considered of much more value than Nancy gave to it, a few other things which came out of the Thomas Lincoln home, a piece of stone with A. L. carved on it, a segment of the old grindstone brought out of Kentucky and used about the kitchen for sharpening knives, an iron wedge, the ox-yoke ring, an old breast chain, etc., but the thing of greatest value was the musket which Nancy claimed Lincoln used in the Black Hawk War.

On our first acquaintance with Nancy and Abe, we learned of this gun and the claim made

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

for it. Our first impression was that something more than a bare statement should accompany the claim, but our further questioning brought nothing more than that Lincoln had brought his gun back from the war, had left it with his folks, and when Sarah Lincoln died it fell to John Hall as the other relics which Nancy possessed. Furthermore, as proof that Nancy and Abe were sincere in their belief, we discovered that they had kept the old musket in a bank vault in Charleston. We reasoned that since they were so positive of the gun's value that they would be willing to pay vault rent for its safe-keeping, we could hardly doubt their sincerity, at least.

Whatever we might say about these two people, we certainly have no right to say that we have ever found them in any way deceiving. Nancy is positive, but honestly so, and we have found that she believes implicitly in her father's word in all the stories which came down to her and which relate to the Lincoln family. The story of the gun came to her through her father, and a more direct way could not be devised for substantiation. John Hall's memory itself could have reached back to the time Lincoln returned from the Black Hawk War, as he was five years old. But, had his own memory failed, he would have been amply informed by his grandfather, grandmother, or Lincoln himself. The gun was a household relic practically all of John Hall's life, and there is no good reason to disbelieve the story.

In all our investigations which we have conducted in order to learn the truth of this gun's history we have found no fact that contradicts

THE LINCOLN RELICS

the Hall story, and our inquiries have gone to a number of authorities including Bannerman, the Smithsonian Institution, and the War Department. According to Bannerman the United States, early in its history, purchased several thousand French-made guns. This was the nearest reference to the gun we found in the search. Jeelinssian seems to be the manufacturer and the town in France in which it was made is Asdetienne.

Not until after the purchase was made of the relics did we get to see the gun. Until that time we had been under the impression that the musket was still in Charleston. When it was brought home we do not know, but we suspected that on the day before when Nancy went to see the doctor about her neuritis might have been the time, for we had written them of the day we would be over to see them and try to buy the relics.

Whatever the truth might be as to when or how the gun came to be at home, it was there that morning. We were not long in closing the deal, and Nancy and Abe began to gather the different articles together, Abe going to the closet and bringing out the gun, as that, in his opinion seemed to be the most valued.

Wrapped in old newspapers and held by binder twine, it had the appearance of being well camouflaged against the thieves so dreaded by the Halls. This was our very first sight of the gun, spoken of so often and kept so completely hidden from sight. Afterward Nancy apologized in a way for making us believe the musket was in a Charleston vault by saying that they did keep it there for a while because of possible

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

theft, but the rental cost was too much. So they decided to keep it at home, leaving the impression with the public that it was not on their premises. She did not say when they did this.

At first we were very much disappointed with the appearance of the old musket, for it showed plainly that some one at some time had tried to modernize the stock by giving it a cheap coat of brown paint. Then we noticed a loose thimble, a piece of the front end of the stock split off and lost, and some other split and damaged places. Abe carefully re-wrapped the gun after this, tied up the wrapping paper with the same binder twine, carried it out to the car and that was the last we saw of it until we returned home. Nancy was busy all this time collecting the other items, and with Abe's help we soon had all articles checked and in the car, including the old single shovel plow which was an afterthought on Nancy's part, but which she wished us to keep along with the other relics.

Even before reaching home it occurred to us, reflecting on the appearance of the old musket when Abe exposed it to view, that Lincoln had somehow referred to his musket in a speech when in Congress. We had casually read the speech several times, but never before had it suddenly come to our mind with such significant import as now. What if the accident which happened to his gun showed evidence of being bent, and the damage we had noticed only casually proved to be that evidence? Finally we decided before reaching home that if Lincoln did bend his musket as he said he did in his speech, and this old musket did not show the effect of the bend

THE LINCOLN RELICS

which it would surely have to show, then the gun could not be genuine.

This is what Lincoln said: "By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk War I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass's career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and, like him, I saw the place soon afterward. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent my musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent my musket by accident. If General Cass went in front of me picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges on wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians it was more than I did, but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry."

This sarcastic, humorous, and now historic speech made by Lincoln while in Congress referred to the claims of the friends of General Cass when they wished to clothe him as a military hero of the Black Hawk War, but we refer to it now as proof that the claims of Abe and Nancy as to the gun's genuineness is substantiated by the splintered stock of the musket which is evident could not have happened to it except by its being bent "pretty badly." It certainly would be a rare coincidence for the Lincolns to have had an old bent musket in the family as an heirloom and it not be the one Lincoln bent in the Black Hawk War.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Lincoln was a Captain when he first went into the War, but when his time was out he reenlisted as "a dignified private." This last enlistment as a private was when he carried a gun, which was from May 27, 1832, to June 16, 1832. At this time all were discharged and Lincoln, temporarily out of a job, no doubt went home to the Buck Grove cabin, leaving his musket where it remained thereafter until it became the property of John Hall, and finally of our friend, Nancy A. Hall.

The square tin box in the list of articles was at one time Lincoln's also. As far back as Nancy could remember her father had kept the small articles which were the coins, knife, and the smaller triangular piece of rock with the initials and dates of 1809 and possibly 1832 which have been mentioned. A small cotton bag, purse and bill fold, all of ancient date in appearance were kept in the box. There may be a historic reference to this old-fashioned tin box, a conjecture of our own, and not Nancy's. In Mrs. Gridley's book (page 92) is the following: "It was after he (Lincoln) had become a lawyer, and at a period in his life when he was distressed financially,...his law partnership was then with Major Stewart in Springfield. One day an agent of the Post Office Department entered and inquired if Abraham Lincoln was in. Mr. Lincoln answered in the affirmative, and the agent told him that he had called to collect the balance due the Department since the New Salem Post Office had been discontinued. Mr. Lincoln seemed annoyed, and a friend who was present offered to loan him the required amount. Making no reply Mr. Lincoln rose and

THE LINCOLN RELICS

pulled out from a pile of papers a small tin box. Turning around he faced the agent and asked the amount due. The sum was named. Mr. Lincoln took from the box a package, unfastened the wrapping, and counted out the exact amount, which was a little more than seventeen dollars. After the agent left the room Mr. Lincoln quietly remarked that he never used any man's money but his own."

The old-fashioned bluish box is approximately 4 x 5 x 6. On the front in print is "Bales Lunch Herring, George A. Bales, St. Louis, Mo." There can be little doubt that the box was made long before round tin cans came into use. It dates back to the early part of the century when supplies, especially for the New Salem and midwestern territory came up the Mississippi River and were wholesaled out of St. Louis. Lincoln no doubt sold "Lunch Herring" out of his store, or used the contents of this particular box himself while still a bachelor, and kept the box for Post Office receipts while postmaster at New Salem. Later the box found its way to his father's home with the small articles enumerated, and was sacredly kept by his devoted step-mother.

The looking-glass, about 14 x 18, is well preserved for the age Nancy claimed it to be, and dates back to the time when Lincoln's mother was living and making her home with Frank Berry in the Beechland country in Kentucky. We can easily conceive this looking-glass to be a pre-wedding present from Thomas Lincoln given to Nancy some time in the two weeks in May previous to their wedding in June, 1806.

The frame of the glass, about two and a half

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

inches wide, has sometime received a coat of paint of faded green, which in no way improves its appearance. Around the edges of the glass the quick silver is off in irregular spots, and through the clear places as a result, an old newspaper was exposed to view. Opening up the back of the glass we found the old paper to be of the date of April 20, 1843. No name happened to be on the paper, but several articles referred to slavery in it and we gained the impression while examining it that it was a Louisville publication. A short article explained a new method of cultivating potatoes which would increase the yield. It could be republished today and never be suspected that it was a hundred years old.

As the old newspaper we found in the back of the glass is proof positive that it is a hundred years of age, we can see no good reason to doubt Nancy's word that it really belonged to Lincoln's mother before her marriage, as it would only be a matter of thirty-six years added to its known age. We replaced the old newspaper with the date, April 20, 1843, exposed through one of the clear spots.

At intervals Nancy would tell of many things that were stolen from her great-grandmother while her father took care of her. These thefts were by a grandson and took place after Lincoln had become a great man in the eyes of the people, and he found a ready sale for all sorts of things which he could carry away from the Lincoln cabin. This uncomplimentary story she applied to her uncle Dennis Hanks as well. Speaking of the grandson she said: "After all his meanness Pap had to keep him when he wus poor

THE LINCOLN RELICS

and sickly, and had to pay his doctor bills too, and bury him when he died. Pap was the best man in the world." Her grief for her father remains with her as though he had passed away only recently. When speaking of him she almost invariably took up her apron and wiped away the tears. Mrs. Gridley, quoting Mr. Hall, refers to the old family Bible and its ultimate end in this fashion: "It was old and finger worn and bore the date of 1799. Uncle Dennis Hanks took it long enough to have it copied and never returned it, for he sold it to a relic hunter and got a right smart price for it."

Although Nancy's brothers and one sister were dead, she did not hesitate to let it be known that the best of feelings did not always exist between them. Her oldest brother was the administrator of her father's estate (the Thomas Lincoln farm in the main). It was a day or two after he died, she told us, as she lay sick in bed that her brother "ransacked her father's papers and burnt 'em right there in that stove before my eyes." Still mad, she said, I might have had some of Lincoln's old letters yet, "if Joe hadn't burnt 'em."

The single shovel plow in this collection was made by Thomas Lincoln while still living in Kentucky, according to the story accompanying it. It is well preserved, showing that it had scarcely ever been left out in the weather, positive hand-made, and looks to be plenty old to fit the story. It had never been painted. Lincoln once told a story which related to his earliest work while a boy in Kentucky, and if the plow story is true, then this is the plow without doubt that Lincoln's father used to

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

make the furrows for the pumpkin seed and the corn. This is his story: "Father had a small clearing in the valley on our farm and planted it in corn and pumpkins one spring. The boys went ahead and dropped the corn by hand in checks made by father's plow; I dropped pumpkin seed in every other hill and every other row. That night there was a big rain up the gulley and the water came down with a rush and washed corn, pumpkin seed and all right into the creek." We can see no reason for doubting the plow story as given by the Halls, or the connected additional story which associates it with Lincoln's flooded crop.

The garden hoe in the collection belonged to Mrs. Lincoln; one she had used until her death. The hoe, worn down more than hoes usually are, is evidence that the owner was quite industrious and had been for many years. Like the plow it, too, had been saved for Nancy by her father as a token of respect for his grandmother and the Lincoln name. The iron wedge is also a historic tool in the Lincoln family, and this particular wedge certainly saw service in rail-splitting. On every farm the Lincolns ever owned, fence rails were one of the major requirements, and the wedge we secured in this collection looks as if it had seen service on every farm. Nancy was insistent that we say that this identical wedge split the historic rails which John Hanks carried into the Republican Convention at Decatur, in May, 1860, and created national enthusiasm to such an extent that it helped greatly to give the United States the greatest President in its history, "The railsplitter," Lincoln.

THE LINCOLN RELICS

Scarcely any of these relics are in perfect condition, all show great age. The iron shows rust, the painted articles faded and scarred, some of the coins with dates scarcely visible, and even the old musket damaged as we have described, especially about the breech where it was bent. At one time a portion of the barrel was cut off by one of Nancy's brothers. This is exactly how Nancy says it happened: "The piece of the musket i know i haven't got it and i dont know what he done with it and my Brother Abe M. Hall slipped it out one day while Father was not at Home and he sawed it off my father kept it a hanging up over the fireplace just like Lincoln did When they lived in This old Cabin thet wus built by Thomas Lincoln and his Son ABE Lincoln in 1831." Then, in another part of the letter she says: "This old musket is Just like it Was when Abe Lincoln gave it to my father John J. Hall."

In all our questionnaires to the authorities where we expected to get information regarding the old musket used by Lincoln in the Black Hawk War, we were never able to get an explanation of how the accident occurred by which the gun was bent. The split in the stock appears to have been caused by striking the end of the barrel against the ground or other object with such force that the breech end of the stock split out, pulling loose the bolt which held the gun to the stock. The escutcheon is lost and a common square nut takes its place. A small piece of the front end of the stock is split off and lost, while several splits show along the side of the gun stock at the place of greatest strain, evidence of a severe blow.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

..ith few errors of judgment we feel certain that Nancy's stories in regard to the relics are strictly reliable. With all her oddities, commonplace illiteracy and her manners common to hard-working old people, she never disclosed in any way the slightest desire to deceive by telling more or less than what her father had told her concerning the articles in the collection.

Returning home, we decided her stories regarding the relics should be in writing. We wrote out some questions which had reference to some of the most important pieces in our judgment, leaving blank spaces between the questions for her answers, all to be returned by a stamped and addressed envelope which we sent along. In a day or two the questions returned answered very intelligently and with no variation from her verbal description and facts relating to each article.

We are convinced that their only reason for disposing of these lifetime heirlooms are the facts already mentioned, viz. fear of theft, and ill-feeling toward the State for what seemed to them a personal slight or insult for failing to consider them as the rightful people to care for the Thomas Lincoln cabin. The latter especially is quite plain after listening to either of them, Nancy or Abe, speak of the treatment they have received, amounting to studied neglect by some people designated by them as "they." Nancy always closes her expressed bitterness by her set windup: "Its jist awful, they ought to be ashamed," etc.

On one of the postcards Abe gives out to the public, and for which he never refuses a tip,

THE LINCOLN RELICS

if offered, Abe the Second poses as Abe the first. He writes in his own hand: "have some rights in this world that havn't been given me, ...the dear people should keep the second honest Abe Lincoln," etc. This isn't much to the second honest Abe's credit, but it shows plainly how he feels about the job that has been denied him.

Personally, we believe that the State of Illinois is neglecting a great opportunity to show the public for the last time the type of people, their manner of living, their belief in signs, and their superstitions from which Lincoln himself never entirely freed himself. So, if we should be consulted as to whether these two people should be recognized by giving them a home where they could meet the people who visit the Lincoln country, we would say: "by all means." No book, however well written, can ever give as true a picture of the Lincoln folks for the last three generations as these people would give by simple contact with the public.

We have at various times been to what may be designated Lincoln localities, and some of them several times. But, to us, with all the knowledge gained from these visits, none gave us the satisfaction or insight into the pioneer life of Abraham Lincoln as these visits to this Lincoln locality and the acquaintance of these remnants of the Lincoln family, Nancy Hall and son Abe.

In Nancy we met Nancy Hanks, Matilda Johnston Hall, and Sarah Bush Lincoln in person. In Abe the Second we met Levi Hall, Square Hall, John and Dennis Hanks, John D. Johnston, and Abraham

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Lincoln. What an asset these two people would be for that old Thomas Lincoln State Park. Nancy, born in the cabin, still belongs to it. And Abe, search the world over, and no one could ever be found who would fit the surroundings as Abe the Second. He is Abe the first in all his poses, sitting, standing, or lying in the shade, and judging by the multitude who call on them for mere curiosity, we feel safe in saying that this Thomas Lincoln Cabin would double its patronage and triple its popularity the moment the State places both these people as keepers of the Thomas Lincoln Cabin. We can hear objections to these views by some who would bring a mentality test. But who, in comparison to the mentality of Lincoln, can be found in all the country who could merit the place under that test?

Personally, we feel that these odd people are as truly relics of the Lincoln family as the old musket, the looking-glass, or the old plate, plow, or hoe. Their attachment to the relics as shown by their fear of their theft made us almost ashamed to separate them. The following incidents may show this fear: On arriving at their home early in the morning of the day the purchase of the relics was made, neither Nancy nor Abe were ready to go to the cemetery as we had written them we wished to do. But Nancy, by a presto change of apron was soon ready, while Abe made but slight effort to hurry, in spite of his mother's continual commands to do so. "Go on, Abe, change that old waist, now hurry up honey." But Abe indicated only a slight effort towards complying with Nancy's appeal, and finally said: "You folks go on,

THE LINCOLN RELICS

I'll stay home and watch the house, somebody might come while we are gone." But we told him to get ready, for we would be home in a little while. Then, after a lot of preliminaries designed by Abe to tire us into the notion of going on without him, and two or three trips to the rear of the house to investigate the back door as if to see if it had come unlocked since he tried it a moment before, we finally convinced him that we were not leaving without him, so he changed his waist and got into the car. But his uneasiness continued during the entire trip. When we stopped at any place he was the first to suggest going on, and at the Buck Grove cabin site, Abe was insistent that we not take the time to drive back to where the cabin stood, about twenty rods to the north of the marker on the road. Abe did not favor his mother's suggestion of returning through the town of Lerna to see Old Man Gray who failed Nancy so miserably in reminiscences of the Lincolns. We suggested going over through Farmington on our way back, but that did not suit Abe either, for it was out of the way. So, we cut our trip short because of Abe's impatience. Reaching home, Abe was soon out and had the house doors checked thoroughly for possible intrusions by robbers, saying: "I guess everything is all right," as though he was a little surprised.

Again, when we began negotiations for the relics Nancy seemed to hesitate about the sale, and said: "Abe, do you want me to sell these things, what must I do?" Abe answered, "Do as you please, Mother, it's your business." But we thought we noticed a satisfied look and a new alertness when Nancy gave the "go" sign, for he

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

went straight for the old musket and soon had it out of hiding for the first time, no doubt, in many years. It is such unconscious actions as these which have given us the impression that these people have told us the exact truth concerning these heirlooms.

All these Lincoln relics are now in the Lane Museum in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Chapter Eleven

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

The personal appearance of Abraham Lincoln in his younger days is often commented upon by all biographers. A description quoted from some biographers by Mrs. Gridley in her book, FROM LOG CABIN TO THE WHITE HOUSE, (page 84-5) is one similar to about all of them. It follows: "It is said by Mr Lincoln's biographers that at this time he was the roughest looking man that one could imagine. He was tall, so angular, so ungainly, and wore trousers made of flax, cut tight at the ankle and baggy at the knees...that he indeed made a comical and ridiculous looking figure. He was known to be exceedingly poor, but yet he was a welcome guest in every house at which he ever called."

Although we believe the description may be fairly accurate at about the time the Lincolns moved to Illinois in 1830, certainly Mrs. Gridley was mistaken if she believed that description applied when he visited home at the Goose Nest Prairie Farm as she seems to indicate. She, like Nancy, wrote as if that farm cabin was built in 1831, when in reality it was the Buck Grove Cabin, and if the description she gave of Lincoln was correct, it was at the latter place and not the former, and six years before the Goose Nest Cabin was built.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

By the time the Lincolns had established themselves at their home at the Prairie Farm, Lincoln had had the opportunity to improve himself in personal appearance equal to New Salem citizens, his fellow politicians in the Legislature, and to have the inclination to look the part of a surveyor, clerk and postmaster, although as poor, possibly, as ever in his life.

This criticism of clothes and manners is so universal by biographers of Lincoln that little doubt can exist as to its truth, and the basis for these criticisms remained with him during his entire life to some extent, and whether he ever made any serious efforts to correct his personal appearance, we have our doubts. To us it appears that as a boy he had grown tall, noticeably angular, and that no one noticed it or heard more about it than himself. His clothes, at first, while no different from those of his boy friends in quality and material fit him ridiculously on account of his unusual height.

As we see Lincoln now, he was conscious of his being superior to his surroundings wherever he might be, so, why should he care particularly for his appearance? Biographers and historians all say he loved to tell stories and that this art proved a wonderful asset to him in simplifying a complicated statement. Not only was his art of story-telling used for clarifying a point, but it also seems it was used by him as an element of surprise for his personal amusement when among strangers.

To tell stories for the purpose which Lincoln used them, it is necessary to have an audience. To get an audience he must first attract people to hear him, and from his earliest effort at

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

the art of entertaining he no doubt found that his personal appearance was an asset. He also found that to be a good showman, a clown to an extent, was to excel in story-telling, so his comical appearance grew to be a part of Abraham Lincoln. It was as much his stock in trade as the pretended illiteracy of Josh Billings or Artemus Ward was to them. Even after he began to be a prominent national character, and was forced to wear tailored clothes, he wore a high plug hat to still exaggerate his tall appearance.

But, to us, Lincoln was not an ugly man. From our earliest memory his picture has appeared more constantly on our walls than that of any member of our family, and we can never remember a single time when we looked upon his likeness and could see distortion, inelegance or want of symmetry in his face. In fact, the expression in his pictures has always been a sort of standard for honesty, truth and genuine nobility, gentility and intellectual elegance.

In a certain attorney's office we have often studied the facial characteristics of three pictures on the wall: Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Lincoln. Invariably our conclusion is that Lincoln's face for beauty in the masculine is superior to the other two. Then, in analyzing our method of arriving at that conclusion we find that along with the visible appearance on the wall, we have associated the many references by historians of uncomplimentary allusions to clothes and general uncouthness which he endured with dignity.

It is history that Stanton, a cabinet officer in Lincoln's Cabinet for the duration of the Civil War, often spoke of Lincoln as "That

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

baboon in the White House." To compare the facial features of Lincoln with those of the woolly whiskered Stanton, or, for that matter, with the facial expression of any of his cabinet, to be strictly impartial one must say that for manly beauty, the face of Lincoln rates with the best, and much higher, in our opinion, than that of Stanton.

After arriving in Illinois, 1830, Lincoln had remained with his father or in the neighborhood of his father's home. With the assistance of John Hanks he had split rails and fenced his father's farm and broken some sod land. For one of Lincoln's temperament it would seem that this of all years would have been one of the most dreary and devoid of hope of any in his entire life. The winter of 1830 and 1831 was historical for the big snow and distressing cold and sickness. And yet, exactly thirty years after that depressing year, he found himself carried forward on a great wave of enthusiasm brought about by the entry into the Republican Convention of John Hanks with identical rails he and Hanks had split in that year of trials and tribulation. On that wave of enthusiasm in that Decatur Convention in May of 1860, he rode to the Presidency.

A trader by the name of Offutt, living in Springfield, had heard that John Hanks was an experienced flatboatman, and had made trips down the Mississippi River to New Orleans while he lived in Kentucky. He came to see Hanks. The two went down to the Lincoln home where they saw Abe Lincoln and John D. Johnston, both experienced flatboatmen. An agreement was reached whereby Offutt was to furnish the boat and pay

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

each of the men fifty cents per day and sixty dollars additional for taking the load to New Orleans and disposing of it. The boat was to be ready in a month at the mouth of Spring Creek where it emptied into the Sangamon River north of Springfield.

So, in March, 1831, these men floated down the flood waters of the Sangamon River from the rear of Thomas Lincoln's home to a point five miles east of Springfield, left the canoe with a Mr. Mann, walked into Springfield and found Offutt at Elliott's Tavern. Offutt informed them that the boat would be at the mouth of Spring Creek, but when they all walked to that place there was no boat to be found. Then it was agreed with Offutt that they, Hanks, Lincoln, and Johnston, were to build the boat, cutting the timber from Government land and floating it down to the mouth of Spring Creek where the actual construction took place.

In the meantime Lincoln walked back by the way of Springfield and then to the place where they left their boat with Mr. Mann and floated down to where they were to build their boat.

While cutting timber for the boat on Spring Creek all the men boarded about one mile away from their work, and ate only two meals a day. After the timber was cut, which took them two weeks, the logs were floated down the river to Sangamontown, a place about seven miles northwest of Springfield. It does not show on the maps of today. Here the logs still had to be taken about a mile and a half to a mill to be cut into suitable lumber for the boat. At Sangamontown a shanty to live in was constructed, and Lincoln was elected to be the cook. The

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

first and only time to our knowledge that that accomplishment was ever credited to him.

As usual Lincoln here established himself as the best entertainer in the way of story-telling in the little burg. An audience was always present to hear his jokes and impromptu stump speeches in the evenings after work. One log on which his listeners sat as reserved seats was dubbed Lincoln's Log. It was worn slick by the audience sliding off because of hilarious convulsions caused by Abe's clownish stories and jokes. It was known as Lincoln's Log until it rotted away after many years.

Lincoln was twenty-two years old, Johnston about twenty-five and Hanks thirty. Here it should be observed that even at this early day, at the time Lincoln made his first step into the world away from his home, he, the youngest member of the crew to which he had attached himself for a business mission, soon assumed leadership and responsibility for the enterprise. An omen of much significance, looking backward, but probably not considered so at the time.

The size of this flatboat is nowhere recorded to our knowledge, but, since the builders all had previous knowledge of this type of boat, it is quite certain that the dimensions were similar to those of the Kentucky blueprints. These were about fifty feet in length, with width about one third of the length, or fifteen or sixteen feet. A full load on a fifty-foot boat was considered 250 barrels, generally of whisky, or 8,500 gallons. Offutt's load which Lincoln, Hanks, and Johnston took on this trip to the southern market, according to Hanks' state-

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

ment was a mixed one, made up of barrel pork, corn, and live hogs. It would be interesting to know in what proportion, for it seems logical to believe that the entire cargo for sale was pork, part in barrels, and part in live hogs, the corn on board for feeding and not for sale.

Barrels, corn, and hogs were loaded on the boat at the place of construction, or Sangamontown, but not the full load, as some hogs were bought of "Square Godby about one mile above the mouth of Salt Creek," which gave considerable trouble while trying to load them. This part of the load came on after their trouble at the dam at New Salem.

John Hanks tells of the lodgment of their flatboat on the Rutledge Mill dam as they attempted to pass the New Salem village, after they began their trip down the river. This dam was about nine or ten miles from their starting point and was reached on April 19, 1831. There is no record that Lincoln ever saw New Salem before this day when their boat lodged on the dam, yet it proved to be the scene of six years of Lincoln's life which biographers find to be as rich with interest as any like period from the log cabin to the White House.

Much has been written about this flatboat misfortune of the Lincoln, Hanks, Johnston, Offutt enterprise, but probably nothing is more authentic than what John Hanks related to Herndon in an interview. He said: "We unloaded the boat, that is, we changed goods from one boat to a borrowed one, rolled the barrels forward, bored a hole in the end of the boat over the dam...water run out and thus we got over; on the dam part of a day and night."

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

There is hardly enough detail in this description of the lodgment to make all the proceedings clear, but it seemed that the owner of the cargo, Offutt, was present, and some biographer quotes him as being greatly pleased with the ingenuity displayed by Lincoln in dislodging the boat, declaring at the time that he would build a boat, make Lincoln captain, and demonstrate to the people that the Sangamon River could be traversed by boat from the Illinois River up to Springfield. Strangely prophetic this boast proved to be, although Offutt played no part in it, for the next spring, 1832, a small steamboat actually navigated the Sangamon up to Springfield, but was compelled to hurry back to deeper water before the freshet receded. The name of this boat was "The Talisman," and captained by a Mr. Bogue up to Springfield and as far back as the troublesome dam at New Salem, which had to be partly destroyed for the boat to creep over, much to the chagrin of Rutledge and Company who owned the mill. From the dam down to Beardstown, Lincoln and Herndon, a cousin to William H. Herndon who became Lincoln's law partner and ultimately his biographer, piloted the boat back and received forty dollars apiece as per contract.

This boating experience of Lincoln is not omitted in order to show that as late as 1832 his ambition had not abandoned the river as a possible field for a life's profession. This last undertaking, however, may possibly have proved to him a stumbling block to his river ambition.

Since John Hanks makes the statement that a borrowed boat was used to unload part of their

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

cargo into after lodging on the dam, it is quite logical that the live hogs were the part of the cargo transferred to it. But first no doubt the boat was balanced over the dam as much as possible, with the greater weight in the rear. Then unloading the hogs into the borrowed boat and rolling the barrel pork forward to the front end gave the balanced boat a tendency to tip over on the down side of the dam. The water remaining in the boat at the rear, being released through the hole Lincoln bored, lightened the rear end enough to allow the heavy loaded end of the boat to tip over the dam, after which the live hogs were probably loaded again on the lower side of the dam.

In the New Salem museum today they will show you the identical augur Lincoln bored the hole in the boat with. It could be, for there were old-fashioned augurs in that day of the capital "T" type and it looks to have the age necessary. It is about an inch and a quarter in size.

But the story of the boat lodging at the Rutledge dam is never complete it seems without the appearance af Ann Rutledge as an interested spectator. A novelist whose name we have forgotten once told the story of Lincoln and Ann Rutledge at the dam as follows which we quote from memory.

The boat had been lodged some hours before the village of New Salem began to come down to the bluff on the west side of the river to view the proceedings of dislodgment. The author timed the appearance of Ann Rutledge and her girl friend as coming down the deep-rutted road to the bank where the crowd of villagers stood watching the procedure at about the time Lin-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

coln was boring the hole in the boat to allow the water to run out. They reached the edge of the bank and had just become interested when Lincoln finished boring the hole and straightened up like an unfolding jack-knife. The act, innocently performed by Lincoln, was so amazingly ludicrous with tousled hair, shirt unbuttoned, pants rolled to his knees and held up by one lone suspender, bare-footed and six-feet-four, that the whole hillside broke out in amused laughter, while Ann's friend, more amused than any near them, cried out: "O, look at that bean pole." The remark caused another outburst of laughter by those who heard--with the exception of Ann Rutledge. Here the author made it appear that Ann was immediately noticed by Lincoln as he raised up from the job of boring the hole in the boat, their eyes met and for an instant gazed while cupid aimed the arrow dipped in the poison of love at first sight. Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge had met, and at that instant one of the saddest and greatest love stories ever told began.

The author goes on to say that not one word was spoken during this day and night Lincoln lodged in New Salem between these two people, but Ann was again on the bank with the crowd when the boat finally started down the stream, and so near that their eyes spoke, and each understood the little hand signal to one another as the vessel became hidden by the bushes along the bank of the river as it departed. In four months Lincoln was established in New Salem as a citizen, and not far from the home of Ann Rutledge.

On this trip no other trouble was encoun-

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

tered; at any rate none is reported by any member of the crew. However, a few miles down the river more hogs were taken on board to finish up the capacity of the boat, which gave them considerable trouble in loading. The trouble was due to the same stubbornness in hog nature which manifests itself to this day. Hanks, not very explicitly, intimates that each hog had to be manhandled into a cart, hauled about a mile to the boat where Lincoln received them and cut open their eyes which Offutt had sown up to blind them when they became too stubborn to drive. This, with the incident of the inhabitants of Beardstown laughing at them as they floated past the town and a stop of one day in Memphis seems to be about all the excitement on the balance of the trip.

The excitement occasioned along the Sangamon River due to this flatboat trip of Lincoln, Hanks, and Johnston seems to indicate that it was the first of its kind ever attempted in that part of the country. The inspiration of the trip up the river the next year of The Talisman, the charterers of which boat lost their ambition on its return trip at the Rutledge dam, required the owners to employ Lincoln to pilot the little steamer down to Beardstown. From where he and his second mate, Herndon, walked back through the country to New Salem. The wind having been taken out of its sails by its experience on its first trip, The Talisman lost all ambition to attempt a second trip. The end of its activity came shortly after when it caught fire at the wharf in St. Louis and burned.

On the return of Lincoln from this second trip to New Orleans coming up to St. Louis by

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

steamer, as we have said, he and Johnston walked as far as Edwardsville with Offutt, where they separated, Offutt and Hanks going to Springfield, while Lincoln and Johnston went to the home of Thomas Lincoln. He had moved to his second farm, the Buck Grove cabin in Coles County. Here he tarried a few weeks to wait for the goods to arrive in New Salem where he had hired to Offutt to run his store.

No biographer to our knowledge has ever told how Lincoln traveled to New Salem from his parent's home to begin work for Offutt. Since it is practically known that he never owned a horse until he was twenty-four or twenty-five years old, it is almost as certain all his trips were made by foot. John J. Hall, whom we have often quoted speaks of Lincoln walking from Springfield all the way to his father's when his home was at the Goose Nest Prairie farm. To save livery hire, he would almost invariably walk out from Charleston (a distance of eight miles) while riding the circuit.

In March, five months before, Lincoln went away from home on the Sangamon River in a row boat, not knowing that the trip to New Orleans would result in a permanent interruption of his former home life. But now, after returning from a three months absence he is again preparing to go from home for the final leave.

It is at this time that the following quotation from our honest Mr. Hall surely applies, although the author we quote from seems to believe it to be the Goose Nest farm. Since Lincoln had time here to help on his father's house after his return from New Orleans, and before going to New Salem under Offutt's employ,

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

surely it is at this second cabin, the Buck Grove home, that Hall had reference to when the following from Mrs. Gridley was written:

"All the tools that Abraham and his father used in construction of the cabin were simple in the extreme--a common axe, a broad-axe, a handsaw and a 'drawer knife.' The doors and floors were made of puncheons, and the gable ends of the structure were boarded up with plank 'rived' by Abraham's hand out of oak timber. The boards used for the roofs were cut by Thomas Lincoln, and it took him six months 'to complete the job.' Forty acres of land were secured and Abraham promised to help his father pay for the farm if he was ever able.

"The time had now come when Abraham Lincoln bade his father and mother a final farewell. In referring to this family event Mr. Hall said that his 'Grandmarm Lincoln' expressed herself as follows: 'When Uncle Abe went away to live we all jest thought the hull world wus gone, and when he'd come back to see us we'd hug and kiss him and try to get him to promise that he'd never go ag'in no more.'"

It is our belief that his trip to New Salem at this time was accomplished in the same manner that he and Johnston returned from St. Louis on their return from New Orleans--by walking. It isn't likely that Lincoln's wardrobe consisted of much weight, or more than could be carried easily in a carpet-bag at the end of a stick over his shoulder. His finances may have amounted to twenty-five or thirty dollars from what he had earned from the Offutt expedition, if John Hanks remembered correctly. In building the flatboat and making the trip to New Or-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

leans and return as far as Edwardsville, they were employed probably seventy-five days. In which case each of them earned about fifty-five dollars, including the division of the sixty dollar bonus divided equally between them. We would say then, that Abraham Lincoln (twenty-two and a half) walked into New Salem in August, 1831, with about thirty dollars and a pack on his back containing about all his clothes.

While we have never been able to find in the records any opinion expressed by Lincoln of the man Offutt, there seems to be an abundance of references from biographers which indicate that Offutt was greatly taken up with Lincoln, and as this first move of Lincoln's was to go into his employ, it is reasonable to believe that all the praise given Lincoln by Offutt, for truth, strength, honesty, and business acumen was sincere on Offutt's part.

When Lincoln arrived in New Salem he was still too early for the goods which were to go into the store, and in this interval of time he described himself as a piece of drift-wood which had eddied into the town from the River Sangamon. This loafing lasted for a few weeks when finally their goods arrived from Beardstown. They then set up their store and for once Lincoln was established in a steady job, and a new home for six years.

The store business with Offutt lasted about one year, and while not successful in making money, he, Lincoln, was successful in making many friends. He was solicited to become a candidate for the State Legislature, carrying his local neighborhood about New Salem by a vote of two hundred and seventy-seven to his opponent's

THE NEW ORLEANS TRIP

vote of three, but the outside districts turned his local majority into defeat, the first and only defeat by the popular vote Lincoln ever experienced.

Chapter Twelve

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Looking back on the life of Abraham Lincoln as he spent it in New Salem one hundred and ten years ago, from August, 1831, to the spring of 1837, and stripping it of biographer's glamor, worship, and adoration due to his greatness in later life and through which vision may have been distorted, one can scarcely see material in the man pictured in that little pioneer town of about one hundred to build upon for the greatest American.

He seems to have been put in full charge of the Offutt enterprises, first as clerk in the store, and later the additional duties as miller when Offutt took over the mill at the dam. In a year he was out of a job, Offutt was gone and passed out of history.

In 1832, there were two or three important moves of Lincoln, but none of them were of a stable nature. He made an unsuccessful race for the Legislature, took an active part in the endeavor to prove the Sangamon River navigable by assisting in bringing up The Talisman to near Springfield and return. He served in the Black Hawk War from April 22 to June 16.

If Lincoln had a steady job from the time he was mustered out of the service during the balance of 1832 and to March 8, 1833, we have failed

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

to discover it in history. It is our opinion that since he himself has stated that his second enlistment was due to the fact that he had no job to go to, and that his last enlistment only lasted from May 27 to June 16, he would still be out of a job, and that he went directly to his father's home again at the Buck Grove cabin, taking with him his damaged musket which we have described in earlier pages. At his father's house he could be of some help in the summer crops, at least for a time. Since he was up for the Legislature, he probably devoted some time in the fall in New Salem before the election which came so near a victory for him.

On March 18, 1833, William F. Berry and Abraham Lincoln went on record at Springfield for a license to keep a tavern in New Salem. The most natural and consequently the most likely story in regard to this business deal is that when Lincoln first went to New Salem, he and also Offutt boarded with a Mr. Cameron, a partner in the Rutledge mill with his brother-in-law, James Rutledge. The lifetime of the Lincoln-Offutt enterprise was for eight months. Lincoln formed the partnership with Berry fully eleven months after Offutt's store closed its doors.

The failure of the Offutt store was the signal for Offutt's departure into obscurity. Lincoln remained, but boarded with the Rutledges at least part of the time while applying himself to surveying for a bare living. He followed this in 1834 and 1835 in addition to his tavern business.

The first Berry-Lincoln store stood as the second log cabin west of the Rutledge tavern,

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

the home and office of Doctor Allen being between them. The month in 1833 in which they took possession of the store is not known, but evidently sometime before an application was made to run the tavern in March. In May of the same year Lincoln received an appointment as postmaster for the New Salem Post Office which was carried along with their store, but, with all the various lines of business, nothing prevented the store from "winking out."

In the fall of 1832, while Lincoln boarded with the Rutledges no doubt the historic romance between him and Ann Rutledge began. Like so many incidents in the early life of Lincoln, this seems to be one more which grew to its greater proportions as time and the greatness of the man became more pronounced, and scarcely remembered until after the death of Lincoln. But it does seem reasonable to assume that in the love affair of these two young people, he at the age of twenty-four, and she at the age of twenty, the now existing built-up romance might fall far short of the true intensity of their love. As the light was thrown back on the scene through an intervening thirty years of time, both principals being dead, and one for thirty-one years, the story of necessity is a combination of imaginations of the different biographers.

In no way minimizing the various phases of imaginative biographers in regard to this, possibly the first love affair of Abraham Lincoln, we believe the real and basic truth in relation to it is more reliably expressed by John J. Hall when he quotes his grandmother, Sarah Bush Lin-

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

coln, than the facts from any other source to our knowledge.

"It wus after a little visit to us, and when we heard Uncle Abe wus goin' to be married, then we asked grandmarm if Uncle Abe never had a gal before. She said, says she, 'Well, Abe wus never a hand no how to run round visitin' much, or to go with the gals neither, but he did fall in love with Ann Rutledge, who lived out somewhere near Vandalia or Springfield. And after she died he came home and told all about her, and cried dreadful, and he never could talk of her nohow but he'd shed tears.' He told Grandmarm onct they wus promised to be married, and that's all any of us ever heard about that love affair. But after Uncle Abe hed lived at Springfield for a while we heerd he wus goin' to marry a Kentucky woman, and nothin' more than that."

Ann Rutledge died in August, 1835. John J. Hall was six years old or more when Lincoln visited at home and told his step-mother this story of his love affair with Miss Rutledge. Had John Hall been present he might have remembered the story first-hand, but not until a short time before Lincoln was to be married to Miss Todd when he made "a little visit" home did Hall hear the story of Lincoln's first love, not from Lincoln, but from his grandmother, Mrs. Thomas Lincoln. As Lincoln was married in November, 1842, John J. Hall was all of thirteen years old when he first heard the story, or seven years after the death of Ann Rutledge.

When this interview took place with Hall he could easily have made it appear that he himself heard Lincoln repeat it to his grandmother. He

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

told the story in 1892, and no one would have been the wiser had he chosen to do so, but, unlike his Uncle Dennis Hanks, he preferred to tell the exact truth, so it was repeated as his grandmother heard and told it.

Here we wish to say that in this as in every other quotation we have given from interviews of John J. Hall in regard to Lincoln family lore, not one, regardless of rank illiteracy has ever shown evidence of the slightest prevarication. Had biographers sought this man in earlier times, in the sixties and seventies before age had dulled the memory, many more true Lincoln family traditions might have been added to the early life of Abraham Lincoln.

Since we are interested far more in what is true in regard to the Lincoln-Rutledge love episode than what is told, we have used the quotation from Lincoln's step-mother as the basic fact around which is built up volumes of speculative imagination from the minds of numerous writers. A seed was sown and a great tree grew up. Now it is one hundred and seven years old, still alive and flourishing.

The story of Ann Rutledge in relation to Lincoln as told by her brother Robert (five years her junior) thirty-four years after his sister's death in a letter to Herndon would seem as authentic as any to be found. Of the time he writes, he was twelve years old. Ann was seventeen, and Lincoln twenty-three. The year was 1831, when Lincoln first made his appearance in New Salem.

He states that after the Offutt store had closed its doors, Lincoln went to board with the Rutledges, leaving the Cameron home. If the

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

change took place immediately, he would have gone there in April of 1832. This was the year Lincoln was persuaded to run in the election for the Legislature, against his will or any hope of election. A literary society was formed in New Salem in the same year and James Rutledge was chosen president of the organization. Mr. Rutledge apparently was above the average as to intelligence in business, and as a promoter of the little town of New Salem. He was born in 1781. When Lincoln boarded at his tavern Rutledge was fifty-one years of age, and it is said by the son that he took a deep interest in Lincoln. In the debates which took place no doubt Lincoln was coached in speaking by the older man as well as his chosen grammar instructor, Mentor Graham.

The son of the president of this society gives an interesting word picture of Lincoln in what was perhaps his first effort at public speaking, but he fails to give the subject of the speech.

"As he arose to speak, his tall form towered above the little assembly. Both hands were thrust down deep in the pockets of his pantaloons. A perceptible smile at once lit up the faces of the audience, for all anticipated the relation of some humorous story. But he opened up the discussion in splendid style to the infinite astonishment of his friends. As he warmed with his subject, his hands would forsake his pockets and would enforce his ideas by awkward gestures; but would very soon seek their easy resting place. He pursued the question with reason and argument so pithy and forcible that all were amazed. The president, at his

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

fireside after the meeting, remarked to his wife that there was more in Abe's head than wit and fun, that he was already a fine speaker, that all he lacked was culture to reach the high destiny which he knew was in store for him. From that time Mr. Rutledge took a deeper interest in him."

This was in the year of 1832, and the son states that soon after this speech Mr. Rutledge urged Lincoln to announce himself for the Legislature. At first he declined to do so, forecasting a defeat for himself. But he came so surprisingly near election that he was highly gratified in defeat.

In our opinion Lincoln, had he been asked the question, would have rated this period of a few month's length while in New Salem the most enjoyable in his whole life. This period was from about August, 1832, after returning from the Black Hawk War, and at which time we believe he began boarding with the Rutledges until they moved out of New Salem to a farm north eight or ten miles, probably the latter part of 1834, or the beginning of 1835.

In the beginning of this period of probably eighteen months he had no steady job or responsibility, so had leisure for his favorite pastime, reading and thinking.

Having grown up in the poorest circumstances his needs and wants were easily obtained by an occasional job of work and then, as in no other time in his life did he let ambition for wealth or luxury interfere with his sole ambition, knowledge. At the Rutledge tavern he had leisure. He was centrally located among friends who depended on him for the various small tasks

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

such as came up in business transactions: contracts, notes, and fair-minded advice, for these he became the favorite adviser among a class of citizens not so proficient, many could not read or write.

In the months at the Rutledge tavern he had opportunity to meet the traveling public, office holders and politicians from distant parts of the country who stopped for lodging. This must have afforded considerable satisfaction to him, for about this time he began a political career which became the vehicle on which he rode to immortal fame. Looking back over a period of one hundred and ten years, and imagining ourselves in the little burg of New Salem at the Rutledge tavern for an overnight stay, what could have been more interesting than the discussions carried on by sojourners in that two-room log lodging-house? In the winter by a great fire in a big fireplace; or in the summer, out in the yard on benches between the tavern and the old well in front, close by the stage road.

Subjects discussed no doubt would vary greatly. At times when no distant travelers were present and local citizens made up the assembly, the movement to rebuild the dam at the mill by donating work of the citizens, a common freewill offering in the old water mill period, might well have been discussed. And in the discussion the exploit of the lodgment of the Lincoln-Offutt flatboat of the year before would be remembered, bringing to Lincoln's mind a story which he heard while in New Orleans. This story, being finished reminded him of another which happened back in Indiana, while digging a

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

well for Josiah Crawford, etc. and no doubt old Josiah's ears burned that night. This crowd probably adjourned long after midnight, each listener retiring with aching sides.

Another night a new assembly, politicians predominated, one may have been Stephen A. Douglas. Internal improvements, canals, railroads, public lands, the national banks, all may have been discussed, but for only a limited time; for slavery--slavery in all its aspects--its place in the constitution, its extention into free territories, its origin and its ultimate extinction, how would it and how could it end with the Union saved, is slavery right or is it wrong? This was the paramount question then, and remained so for another thirty-one years.

But, while these were memorable evenings for Lincoln at the Rutledge tavern, we can easily believe that there were many more which followed in the wake of these which lingered long and often in the mind of Lincoln. Not a day passing in all his after life that did not bring memories back to him of the most sacred sort. These were the days toward the latter part of the Rutledge sojourn in New Salem. Days after the attentions of William Berry and Samuel Hill for Ann Rutledge had subsided and her love for the absent McNamar was on the wane. Lincoln was falling in love for the first time, and she became his sweetheart.

It would be difficult indeed to depict these days in the life of Abraham Lincoln and fully describe the pleasure he no doubt experienced in that one short year. Sometime in the past we have read an article purporting to have been

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

based on the word of Mrs. Rutledge, the mother of Ann Rutledge, who gave a sort of descriptive narrative of her daughter and Abe together at the tavern. As we remember the story she told of their genuine devotion to one another, of her daughter going to meet Lincoln before he arrived at the home, of their serious talks and playful moods; the latter sometimes resulting in dousing one another with pans of water or throwing the dishrag in the face with deadly accuracy and a final race or two around the tavern that the victim might punish the thrower of the rag in a lover's method.

There were parties, corn huskings, logrollings, weddings, bebating society meetings over which Ann's father presided as president, and political meetings where Abe, the candidate for Representative no doubt made the principal speech of the day or evening. Then we can think of evenings when Ann and Abe, with Mentor Graham, the school teacher, would spend hours together in the study of grammar, or the principles of surveying, a new profession taken up by Lincoln about this time. All this may have happened in the only twelve months of Lincoln's life when he might truthfully say he was a happy and cheerful man.

To verify the latter observation in respect to Lincoln's optimism of that particular date, two quotations from the pen of Ann's youngest brother of October, 1866, are given: "I think Mr. Lincoln read law in 1834 and 1835, read surveying probably in 1833 and 1834,...I cannot say whether Mr. Lincoln was a radically changed man after the event of which you speak (the death of his sister) or not, as I saw little of

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

him after that time. When he first came to New Salem and up to the time of which we write, Mr. Lincoln was all life and animation, seemed to see the bright side of every picture," etc. Again he refers to a letter received by his mother from Lincoln after he was elected President. In his letter he had occasion to thank her for nailing a political libel put out by opponents to the effect that he had left the Rutledge tavern without paying his board bill. "This slanderous report reached the ears of Mrs. Rutledge, or Aunt Polly, as Lincoln always referred to her. She took immediate steps to correct this infamous libel and caused a letter to be written to Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln at once wrote Mrs. Rutledge, expressing his thanks for her kindness and interest in his behalf, recurring with warm expressions of remembrance to the happy days spent under her roof."

But these joyful, happy, and hopeful days for Abraham Lincoln soon disappeared, apparently leaving a void in his life which forever after remained a slough of despond and a constant reminder of a beautiful life denied, one "Which might have been."

Ann Rutledge died on August 25, 1835, and was buried in a country cemetery north of Petersburg about seven miles where her remains lay until taken up and brought to a new cemetery in the south edge of Petersburg. The Rutledges had disposed of their tavern in New Salem and moved to a farm where Ann died in August and her father on December 3rd, following. We have visited the grave of Ann Rutledge at Petersburg where we admit the surroundings are nice and appropriate, but, had we been consulted, we, as

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

with a great mass of the people, would still prefer to go to her original resting place, to the sacred spot in Lincoln's mind, where she was laid with the hands of her friends and relatives, and where the grave was marked with a simple boulder with her name, Ann Rutledge, carved in a semicircle on it.

In 1862, Lincoln wrote to a young girl who had lost her father in the war, and in the letter were these words. We have often wondered if the early death of Ann Rutledge was not the inspiration for them, together with his own grief. "I have had experience to know what I say...in this sad world of ours sorrow comes to all, and to the young it comes with bittered agony because it takes them unawares." What words could have pictured the ending of that happiest of all years more perfectly or express more truly his own sorrow than those he used to console this young girl in her bereavement?

Lincoln's actions at the time of Ann Rutledge's death and shortly afterward seem more or less obscure. So far as we have knowledge he was not at her funeral. He is said to have visited her in her last sickness, but no biographer pretends to repeat what was said on that last visit. Ann's own brother did not remember whether Lincoln was a radically changed man after Ann's death, for he "saw little of him after that time," but we can be certain that John J. Hall repeating what Lincoln related to his grandmother, Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, gave as true a word picture of Lincoln's feelings as any biographer.

There are many and varied stories as to the effect the death of Ann Rutledge produced on

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

the mind of Lincoln. By close scrutiny it seems that none of them can be much more trustworthy than mere opinions of the writers; opinions which apparently came from a desire to produce a great and historic love story which might compare favorably with the supreme greatness of the man who suffered the loss of his first love, who, quoting him, took him unawares. He was then twenty-six years old.

We have read, and seen a movie depicting it, that Lincoln dashed out into a terrible storm in the night to the grave of Ann Rutledge, because, in his agony, "he could not bear the thoughts of the rain falling on her grave." Lincoln continued to live in New Salem after the burial of Ann Rutledge, although it was seven miles from the cemetery where she lay buried. Unless Lincoln said himself that he did it, or some reliable person made affidavit that he followed Lincoln to the grave through the rain for seven miles over the Illinois country roads of that day, neither of which we have discovered in print, we prefer to believe that his demonstrations of grief, while agonizing in the extreme, were more truly described by his good step-mother than any biographer who wrote from his own imagination.

It seems quite reasonable to believe that Lincoln visited his home folks soon after Ann Rutledge's death, and possibly, if he was not at the funeral, he made the visit home for the very reason that he felt unequal to the trial of attending the burial, believing there might be some alleviation of distress by distance. In fact, it is our belief that after Lincoln was informed of her death, or that death was

approaching as a certainty, he did visit his father and mother to avoid the funeral. This was in the last days of August, 1835, when his folks lived at the Mud Point cabin, in Coles County. The quotation from John J. Hall should not be forgotten; "He told Grandmarm onct they wus promised to be married...And after she died he came home and told all about her, and cried dreadful, and he never could talk of her nohow but he'd shed tears."

How long Lincoln lingered with his folks at home when Ann died can only be conjectural, but from numerous references to his return at other times it was probably two or three weeks; long enough at least to alleviate to some extent the bittered agony which took him unawares.

Regardless of the familiar scenes from which he thought to escape by his visit home, Lincoln's interests in New Salem were too much to be abandoned. As surveyor, he possessed a horse, at that time. We presume it was his means of transportation to his folks and back to New Salem when his visit ended.

Lincoln's life while he lived in New Salem is vague and indefinite. The reason need not be far-fetched when we consider that from about the year Lincoln departed from the place to take up the law in Springfield the little village itself had thinned to only a very few families, and in another year or so not a single one was left. This rather strange and singular fate of New Salem was due to the fact that about two miles north another small town, Petersburg, was made the county seat of a new county, Menard. It had once been a part of Sangamon County. A rapid exodus of residents

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

to the new county seat was inevitable, and the town of New Salem became only a memory.

For over a period of twenty years from the time Lincoln lived in the town until he was elected President of the United States the site of the town, so far as historic interest was concerned was but little more than farm land. Naturally, as the greatness of one of its former citizens grew, historians and biographers began to re-establish the village of New Salem into story form, which, to say the least, has restored its memory to greater fame than the village itself could have ever gained, had it never been molested.

But, to-day, one hundred and seven years after the town faded from the face of the land, its memory is not enough, for admiration of the great Lincoln who once walked its wide and grass-grown streets for six years has demanded that it be restored to its one time greatness. To the credit of the citizens of Illinois, New Salem can again be seen as Lincoln saw it in 1831 to 1837. Thousands of Lincoln admirers now not only visit this memory village but visualize Lincoln walking its streets as of old, not forgetting Ann Rutledge.

From the varying and sometimes conflicting evidence which has come down through the years in regard to all the activities of Lincoln, both from business and necessity while he lived in New Salem, we have concluded that three of the buildings in the village were all that he conducted business in. The first of these was the log storeroom in which he clerked for Denton Offutt when he first landed in New Salem in August, 1831. This store building stands high

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

above the mill, probably a hundred feet, and close to the remains of the old road as it ascends from the river bottom, four or five hundred feet west of the mill and dam. This store building has been restored for the park, and just north of it is the restored Clary Store, which stands about sixty feet northeast, and is the last building towards the river in the east part of the town.

The famous Jack Armstrong fight occurred in front of this Offutt store, which has been told in so many versions by the different writers that each describes a different fight seemingly. Our version must be a composite one made up from all the others told long ago by other authors, none of whom were eyewitnesses of the scrimmage.

The composite understanding of this episode seems to be that Jack Armstrong from whom Lincoln won his laurels belonged to the Clary Grove gang of boys who boasted a bully. Jack was it. To start with something authentic, we wish to quote from a folder put out by the Department of Public Works and Buildings of Illinois. In this folder a description of Clary's store in New Salem is given, which is in part as follows: "William Clary, brother of John Clary, the first settler in Menard County and founder of Clary's Grove five miles west of New Salem, built a grocery about 1830. This was the town saloon and was operated as such until 1833, when Clary migrated to Texas. No definite information has been recorded regarding the cabin after that date. It probably continued to serve as a meeting place of the rougher element for a short time, with a new

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

proprietor, and later abandoned or moved to Petersburg."

The following is our story of the Jack Armstrong fight before our discovery of the folder we have just quoted. Jack Armstrong belonged to a gang of ruffians from a little rival town about four or five miles west of New Salem. The place was called Clary's Grove. Since the closest store to Offutt's was Clary's, which, as we have said stood about sixty feet northeast of Offutt's where Lincoln was clerking, it is not unreasonable to believe that a relationship existed between some of the Clary Grove boys and Clary of the rival store. Which relationship, properly nourished, might easily instigate a contest for the purpose of establishing Lincoln's right to sell goods so close to Clary, or to show Lincoln that they, Clary's gang, should have been consulted beforehand.

It is too late now to ever know that any such reason for this Jack Armstrong and Lincoln fight existed. But, since human nature, cause and effect, and the survival of the fittest are all natural laws and have had their effect on the human race since prehistoric times, we consider that the same laws were in operation in New Salem when Lincoln made his first appearance in that little village in 1831.

Until we discovered the bit of history we were unaware that Clary's "grocery" was the village saloon. Since this discovery we can safely surmise a little farther and guess that one or two of Jack Armstrong's friends, possibly himself were nephews of William Clary, and had made Uncle William a visit or two before

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

calling upon the tall, boyish looking competitor, Lincoln.

As to the exact data relating to the Denton Offutt store we refer to the following historic sketch which we believe is as true as may be found at this time. "Denton Offutt secured a license on July 8, 1831, to operate a retail store in New Salem. With the assistance of Abraham Lincoln he erected a log store building the following month. After its completion Lincoln was employed as clerk. He slept in the rear room and boarded with the Rowen Herndon family who lived a short distance to the southwest. Later Offutt rented the mill and employed William Green to assist Lincoln with the details of both enterprises. This famous little store operated for the short period of eight months and closed its doors in April, 1832, when Offutt fled the country, leaving his creditors unpaid. Whether the store was abandoned or moved away is not known."

As to the statement above that Lincoln boarded with Rowen Herndon, we also have an equally positive one from R. B. Rutledge that "he boarded with John Cameron along with Offutt. He afterward boarded with my father." It is our opinion that both of these statements, on the face of them contradictory to one another, may be true.

The history of New Salem states that James Rutledge and James Cameron built the mill in 1829, a year after Cameron had entered eighty acres on which the town stands. It is not known definitely that Rutledge built his tavern the year before, or in 1828, but is "probably" so, as it was thought that by these first set-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

tlers that the mill would attract customers who would also be customers to a tavern. This belief led them to the determination to lay off lots for sale. At any rate John Cameron was a first settler and first owner of a cabin, which cabin stood "southwest." It was the nearest dwelling to the Offutt store, and, since a son of James Rutledge says that Lincoln boarded with Cameron along with Offutt, later boarding with his father, we believe his statement. After all, it could be that Lincoln boarded with both Cameron and Rowen Herndon, with Cameron first, or until he sold out to Herndon, as the site of each of their cabins is identical, southwest of the Offutt store, about half way to the Rutledge Tavern site.

So far as Lincoln's employment at the Rutledge mill is concerned, the statement made by R. B. Rutledge, a son of the owner, ought to be satisfactory. He says: "It has been stated that Mr. Offutt owned or had an interest in the mill, and Mr. Lincoln was employed to assist in taking care of the new enterprise. This is a mistake. James Rutledge and John Cameron, partners, first commenced erecting a mill on Concord Creek, about six miles below New Salem, where they owned the land. But large inducements being offered and the proprietors fearing scarcity of water, they removed to New Salem in 1828 and built the mill and laid out the town. Neither Mr. Lincoln nor Offutt had any pecuniary interest in it. It belonged solely to Rutledge and Cameron, and Mr. Lincoln only assisted in repairing it as other neighbors did, gratuitously. He was at this time the clerk of Mr. Offutt, who kept a general country store,

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

including dry goods, groceries, and all the varieties which belong to such an establishment."

This story seems true. If it is not we would have to say that Offutt worked pretty fast in acquiring new enterprises for the inexperienced young clerk to take over, commencing with the store in August, 1831, and pursuing a downhill business until the next April, 1832, when he faded out of New Salem never to be heard of again, leaving, as some contend, unsatisfied debts behind him.

Chapter Thirteen

LIFE IN NEW SALEM (CONTINUED)

From a summary of all records, when Offutt closed his store in April, Lincoln became free from any responsibilities so far as a steady job was concerned. At this period many of the stories originated of his doing odd jobs about the town and even in the country where he would visit, help about the house, cut wood, kindling, etc. all for his board. But not for long, for in the same month of April he left town not to be seen for three months or more. On the 22nd of April he was in Richland, a small town west of New Salem about twenty miles, and was on that day chosen captain of a volunteer company for the Black Hawk War.

We have before spoken of Lincoln's return from the Black Hawk War, and our belief that he went almost directly to his parents' home at the Buck Grove cabin, walking most of the way from where he received his discharge. His horse had been stolen the day before. He probably reached home about the first of July, with no particular job to go to after returning except the incentive to get into politics in the New Salem country. He had there been placed on the Whig ticket as a candidate for the Legislature.

We have come to the place in Lincoln's New Salem life now which is between two known dates,

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

the end of the Black Hawk War and his appointment as postmaster, in May, 1833, (a period of eight months and a few days). In this time various biographers have kept him busy as an unsuccessful candidate for the Legislature, a student of Mentor Graham in the study of grammar, a student of and boarding with a drunken vagabond by the name of Kelso who interested Lincoln in Robert Burns and William Shakespeare. Also, a William Green claims credit for many things: of inducing Lincoln to study law about this time; many of the odd jobs stories we have mentioned; and finally, for Lincoln's profession of surveying, which was a definite source of income.

Lincoln's postmastership at New Salem, if dates can be relied upon from the records, began in May, 1833. Samuel Hill was appointed first postmaster for New Salem on Christmas Day, 1829. If his appointment was for four years, then Lincoln either served part of Hill's term, or from May to the 25th of December, 1833, as deputy, or to fill out Hill's unexpired term. The post office lasted at New Salem until 1837, when it was discontinued--a two-term period of four years each. As the government agent called on Lincoln for a final settlement as mentioned in an earlier chapter, we presume he was the postmaster when the office was discontinued. This would indicate that Lincoln served a total period of four years and six months as postmaster. Samuel Hill operated a general store on the south side of the main street in New Salem which was second house west of the Rutledge Tavern, and here for a time the post office was housed. Lincoln clerked for Hill in this store

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

and no doubt when Hill disposed of his interest in the store he gave up the postmastership along with the business which would account for Lincoln serving out part of Hill's term.

In the reconstruction of New Salem as undertaken by the State of Illinois the original locations of the log cabins are no doubt correctly placed. Evidently the ground on which the village once stood had been allowed to return to its natural state, growing up in briars and bushes, never being used at any time for cultivation. Where the buildings once stood some of the rock foundations were found as left when the log structures were torn down and moved to Petersburg. Many of the old excavations marked the places of cellars, warm houses, and wells. It was certainly an excellent spot for a small village such as New Salem was in its day, for all could find favorable, high and dry spots for their respective homes.

Our first visit to this village site of long ago was before much had been done toward its reconstruction, with only markers showing the cabin sites of the former inhabitants. The old Onstot Cooper Shop had been replaced on its old location, having been brought back from Petersburg, the only structure existing of all which had been removed. This fact was accounted for by it having been weatherboarded and preserved by its owner in Petersburg. Its history was told us by an old man who had taken the job of moving it back to New Salem and rebuilding it on its original foundation. When the flue was rebuilt and run up through the roof, a piece of the original walnut rafter had to be cut. This piece he kept and from it gave each of our par-

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

ty a small piece.

It was the first cabin to be replaced. It was first built in 1835, moved to Petersburg in 1840, and replaced to its original foundation in 1922.

It would be a greater accomplishment than one could reasonably hope for to take all the evidence handed down by biographers and weave it into a reliable, connected, and continuous story of Lincoln's life while in New Salem. Why they seem so contradictory in time, place, and importance is plain to see. It is very much as if some promising youth who had lived among us some twenty-five or thirty years ago had suddenly become great. All of us living who knew the young man in his youth would immediately become in a manner biographers; some creditable, some not. But all of us would give descriptions, accounts, statements of fact, false statements, details, particulars, and circumstances—all according to our individual ability to remember, to be truthful and accurate, or, to lie and boast.

To us, after a search for a straightforward career of Lincoln through the six years of his life in New Salem, the picture we see is one painted by an array of artists such as the above, who have, with amateurish brushes, painted a scene from memory which happened fully twenty-five years before the attempt at portraiture. The picture is confusing for lack of regular order. A few recorded dates, such as his entry into the Black Hawk War, his postmaster appointment, his election as representative, his tavern license and his work as surveyor are reliable and make corner stones for

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

some fair deductions. The dates of Ann's death and her father's death are authentic, but the month and year of their move to the farm on which they died is vague.

It would seem that the brother of Ann Rutledge, R. B. Rutledge, would be the best of authority on anything relating to that family. He writes: "McNamara (Ann's lover) had purchased the farm on which we lived at the time of Ann's and Father's death, prior to his leaving the county in 1832 or 1833, and did not return until the fall of 1835, after Ann's and father's death." He informs us that his father, James Rutledge, moved to the farm which McNamar had purchased prior to leaving the county, then expressed doubt as to whether it was in 1832 or 1833. In fact, he did not say when his father moved to the farm, only that McNamar had owned the farm they lived on, and in the period that McNamar was away from New Salem.

Believing Rutledge's statement, this question naturally arises, why did James Rutledge move to McNamar's farm? Was it because financial inability prevented him from purchasing one of his own? Had Ann Rutledge's father become a bankrupt, and through her influence she had induced her lover to assist her father to a new start? Or, in addition to Ann's influence, not unlikely, McNamar, a successful business man, on leaving fully expected to return and marry Ann, believing that to put his farm into the care of his future father-in-law was only good business.

Without positive knowledge we can believe at this late day that it was through the influence of Ann that her devoted father was induced to

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

move to her lover's farm where she could wait more contentedly for McNamar's return from his intended visit to his folks in New York State. In other words, Rutledge moved from the scene of his bankruptcy in New Salem to the McNamar farm because of his deep attachment for his daughter, and her deep attachment for McNamar.

While the Lincoln-Rutledge-McNamar love triangle is now considered a myth by some good authorities, we, after a study of the meager facts available, do not believe the story can be so easily set aside. We conclude that Ann's love for McNamar began early in their acquaintance, perhaps when McNamar first made his appearance in New Salem in 1829 or 1830; that it continued growing in intensity as long as McNamar remained in New Salem; that a betrothal in due time existed between them which was sacred to Ann while she lived, and that the Rutledge-McNamar love affair was well-known and respected by Lincoln during the time all parties were residents of New Salem. Then we believe it quite likely that as the continued absence of McNamar grew from weeks to months, and then to years, Lincoln's visits to the Rutledges after they had moved to the McNamar farm from New Salem, occasional at first, gradually became more numerous as he saw the rays of hope grow brighter for him. Ann's love for McNamar was forced to fade because of the unexplained and indifferent prolonged absence of her lover.

Without the testimony of Lincoln's devoted step-mother who said: "...but he did fall in love with Ann Rutledge, who lived out somewhere near Vandalia or Springfield. And after she died he came home and told all about her, and

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

cried dreadful, and he never could talk of her nohow but he'd shed tears"; without this statement little if any evidence is in existence to substantiate the fact that a love romance of a serious nature ever existed between Ann Rutledge and Lincoln. To our mind, this statement alone is sufficient, and that it was made at the time we have before suggested; on a visit to his home at Mud Point in August, 1835, possibly to avoid being present at the death and funeral of Ann Rutledge.

We are mindful of the fact, as before stated, that this love affair was only a myth, a mere snowball which gathered force and dimensions as it rolled down the years, having its beginning from a few small incidents which were recalled to memory by New Salem residents at least twenty-five years after their alleged occurrence. These incidents had long been forgotten, vague and inactive, but with spark enough left to be fanned into flame by the sudden brilliancy occasioned by accession to the Presidency of one of the three principals in the almost forgotten episode in New Salem.

It is now also contended by those who believe the story to be only a myth, that it represents a composite story of three love stories in which Lincoln was the principal in each: the Ann Rutledge case was first; and in a year at the same little village of New Salem, Mary Owens came to the memory of the relators for another story; while five years later Lincoln became involved in a third love story, this time with Mary Todd, after he had gone to Springfield to live.

We can easily see that to the general run of

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

readers of Lincoln biography the composite picture of the love affairs of Lincoln and the three ladies mentioned might rest easily on the mind. But a little scrutiny into the known facts would, in our opinion, separate the so-called composite love myth into three separate and distinct love episodes. No one of these has escaped a substantial addition of imaginary embellishments by writers to suit their own ideas of a love story commensurate to the greatness attained by Lincoln twenty-five years after the foundation of the stories alleged.

As an example of how the three composite love stories might fall apart in which Lincoln participated we may take up again the statement of his step-mother. Reason itself is sufficient to prove which of the ladies she had reference to when she said: "...and after she died he came home and told all about her, and cried dreadful," for Ann alone was the only one of the three who died in Lincoln's lifetime. This statement of Lincoln's step-mother in our opinion is not only the first but the most reliable of all the evidence now extant bearing on the relationship of Ann Rutledge and Lincoln. It has been available from the date of Ann's death in 1835, and possessed by two of Lincoln's most beloved relatives, Sarah Bush Lincoln and her grandson, John J. Hall. What an oversight on Herndon's part when he failed to ask Lincoln's step-mother what she knew of Ann Rutledge and Lincoln's love affair when he visited her in 1865.

Lincoln himself after Ann's death seemed reticent about the love affair with her, for, despite the fact that every available effort

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

has been put forth to find some evidence emanating from Lincoln in regard to it, not one word from him ever reached the authors of the so-called myth except what we have quoted coming from his own folks.

We can believe that there was one exceptionally good reason for his reticence. In the first place we believe Lincoln told his step-mother the truth before McNamar's return. Now, granting the truth of his step-mother's statement, what could be the state of Lincoln's mind other than reticence or concealment when, on returning to New Salem after his visit home to avoid the funeral, he found McNamar returned then or shortly afterward from his long absence to claim Ann Rutledge for his wife? And no one knew that fact better than Lincoln.

That Ann Rutledge was intensely in love with McNamar is not inconsistent and has not been disputed by any writer. Even though he might have been seemingly neglectful as a true lover, the fact that McNamar owned the farm on which she and her folks lived may have seemed to her, also McNamar, sufficient to bridge over his long and thoughtless absence. And no doubt this was the argument she put up to Lincoln, making her promise to him contingent on the return of McNamar, which, at the time of Ann's death had not occurred, so Lincoln felt free to tell his step-mother that he and Ann were promised to be married.

In a short time after Ann's death, authorities now say, McNamar returned. A short time may mean a week, two weeks, or possibly a month or two, but, whatever the time, he came back. When he arrived in New Salem, a surprise return,

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Lincoln, remembering his contingent bethrothal to the dead girl could only think, but what could he say?--Nothing.

We have said that McNamar might have acted seemingly indifferent toward Ann; and, for one who was to be her husband in no great distant future, it was not only seemingly so, but certainly a fact. Ann's actions, if we know their case, were exactly the opposite to his. She seemed the disappointed, distressed, and forsaken girl, deeply in love but thoroughly bewildered as though a lost child. He was either cold, calculating, and all business, believing that "yes" in love meant the same as "yes" in business; that absence and indifference meant nothing so long as he, McNamar, the business man played the cold-blooded part; either that or, and this is our belief, McNamar was not deeply in love with Ann Rutledge, ever, at any time.

In all of our investigations among the writings of the different authors we have found several probable excuses for the actions of McNamar, ranging from a long spell of sickness which overtook him while traveling through Ohio on his way back to his former home in New York. This sickness, it is said, kept him from writing back to Ann. Then the excuse is advanced that after he finally arrived home he found his father in his last sickness, necessitating a long period of settling up affairs, etc. all of which took from the latter part of 1832 to 1835, or about three years.

Not asking the authors of these excuses to tell us of their origin or how they were obtained, we would ask, why, if McNamar was deep-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ly in love with Ann would he be so very different from other lovers, why would he fail to have a bedside nurse to write, not just once, but every day of his sickness until he became convalescent. Then, if a normal lover, why he would not keep up the daily correspondence back to New Salem or to wherever the Rutledges at that time received their mail? But, overlooking the alleged sick spell in Ohio and counting that excuse legitimate, what, if any, can the excuse be after the lover regains his health sufficiently to transact business, and still fails to keep his promised future wife informed of his own welfare and his hope soon to be able to return to her?

Then, toward the last, in August, 1835, McNamar was nearing the end of the settlement of his father's estate. A business consisting of what? Only a few years before, he had assumed the name of John McNeal, gone West to parts unknown to his own family in order to make a new home for his father and family who had lost all they had. So, he certainly could have little business to settle so far as his father's estate was concerned.

But, granting that his father had again accumulated sufficient property after McNamar went West and settled in New Salem to require considerable time to settle the business, how many times would it happen that there would be just enough business to settle to keep a lover from the bedside of his bride-to-be, allowing him to arrive "shortly after the death of Ann Rutledge," rather than shortly before her death?

In our opinion the Lincoln-Rutledge love story can be summed up as follows:

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Ann Rutledge was deeply in love with John McNamar.

McNamar's love for Ann Rutledge was decidedly indifferent.

Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge was intense at the time of her death.

Ann's love for Lincoln was listless and secondary, never was and never could have been equal to that she had for McNamar.

We believe we can understand why Herndon, Speed, or any of Lincoln's close friends never heard him mention this particular love affair. Deeper yet, on the surprise arrival of McNamar after Ann's death, a counter to his intense grief immediately came to him. In a year Mary Owens became his new attraction, and in her case he was not reticent or secretive. The Owens love affair, coming so soon after the intense mental agony occasioned by Ann's death, and divulged to his step-mother at that time is our best evidence, as we believe, that McNamar's return was balm to the heart of Lincoln. He realized in his own secretive mind, that, had Ann Rutledge lived she would have become, not his, but the wife of John McNamar, which, to him, because of his great love for her would have given him greater and more lasting sorrow than nature's course brought him by her early death.

It has been claimed by some writers that after McNamar left New Salem to return to his folks in the East, that Ann Rutledge was a daily visitor to the post office of which Lincoln was postmaster, where she received expected letters from McNamar. This, according to the writers of the Rutledge fiction, afforded Lincoln ready

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

knowledge of whatever correspondence might be taking place between them while McNamar was away. This bit of superfiction was and no doubt is yet believed by many readers without question, when, with a little reflection on the part of the reader, it would reveal itself only as the child of the author's mind. If the Rutledges still lived in New Salem at the time Lincoln was postmaster, and if the village received daily mail six days of the week, the statement might be believed, but still it would be a little strong, for not many letters, according to excuses made up for McNamar ever came back to Ann.

It is very doubtful if the Rutledges continued to get their mail in New Salem after they moved to the McNamar farm, which was seven miles north of the town. But, even though they did, we can be certain that the author was dreaming when he made the statement that she was a daily visitor at the post office in order to get an occasional letter from McNamar when the mail only came once a week. This unusual anxiety on the part of Ann would mean a trip of fourteen miles per day, eighty-four miles per week. She would know before she made the five trips per week that they would be useless.

In view of the above glaring absurdity, an example of many which seem to have crept into the so-called biographies of Lincoln, it is our opinion that when, if ever possible, all of them are finally sifted from the life of Lincoln, leaving one true history, that history will be a story as plain, honest, and great as the man himself. But the author cannot be a novelist, he must be a true historian.

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Recently we visited the McNamar farm where Ann Rutledge died. This farm can be reached by taking road 97 out of Petersburg, Illinois, to the village of Atterberry (a distance of about 7 miles), then about 3 miles east. Formerly the Old Coach Road went by the farm more directly from Petersburg (more properly at that time, New Salem) and the distance then was scarcely more than half the distance now on improved roads, as the Old Coach Road went angling through in a northwest direction directly by the farm.

The first impression one gets on nearing the place is the unusual good quality of the land with its rolling surface. This would have been very attractive to the early settlers because of its easy drainage without the trouble and work of ditching. The timber--judging by the uncleared woods, trees of bur oak, walnut, sycamore, etc., still standing to-day--indicates the best of soil over the high land as well as the low.

Nearing the old homestead site one is struck by the natural beauty of the location. One's estimate of John McNamar's judgment as to land fertility and natural pioneer advantages certainly rises many points. The fine large well-kept buildings stand as proof that in the last hundred years the farm has been bountifully generous to its very few different owners.

On the site of the old log home, which originally stood nearer the road than the house of to-day, is a tablet made of wood with the following inscription: "On this very spot stood the log cabin in which Ann Rutledge died, August 25, 1835. On the hill-side to the west

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

stood a large oak tree under which Abraham Lincoln wept bitterly after leaving the sick room of Ann Rutledge where their last communion was held."

Probably three miles southeast in the direction of Petersburg, the course of the Old Coach Road to New Salem, is the place still known as the Old Rutledge Farm once owned and occupied by Ann's uncle. Like the McNamar farm, this, too, is typical of the best in Illinois. Here the old home location is situated prominently on high rolling ground with a handsome two-story hundred-year-old brick house, which Ann's uncle built. This house is now modernized. Here it is said Ann spent much of her time with her uncle, aunt, and cousins.

Southwest of the home site and across a valley, with a small creek running through it, about a quarter mile away on an eminence can be seen through the trees the gravestones of the Old Concord Cemetery. This was the burying ground for the Rutledges, and it was to this cemetery that Ann was brought from the McNamar farm home.

There are probably one hundred markers to graves in it. It is very well fenced but indifferently cared for. It is inaccessible for machines, none coming closer than the Rutledge home site which is itself a quarter mile from the road since the Old Coach Road was abandoned years ago. No path from any direction leads to it. It is strictly an isolated acre, yet it was in this cemetery Ann Rutledge lay for three-quarters of a century with no marker other than a large boulder which was supposed to have been placed at the head of her grave by her lover,

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Abraham Lincoln, in one of his numerous trips said to have been made to this lonely spot. As her father's grave is not marked in any way it is reasonable to believe the Lincoln story. Her father died three months after her; and as her folks moved away shortly, within a few months, Lincoln alone remained the only one near who would seem interested in marking the grave. The identical stone weighing about a hundred pounds, was removed with her remains to her grave in the Petersburg Cemetery and her name is now carved on it.

Her empty grave is next to that of David H. Rutledge and heads a row of probably eight or ten others of the same name, some of whom are probably her brothers and cousins. The names of Hardy, Thomas, William, Mary, Robert, and James are remembered. Fastened to two posts above the empty grave and similar to the one at the McNamar home is a marker bearing this inscription: "Old Concord Cemetery. This marks the original grave of Ann Rutledge, born Jan. 7, 1813, died Aug. 25, 1835. Abraham Lincoln made many pilgrimages alone to this sacred spot. He often said, 'My heart lies buried here with Ann Rutledge!'"

No grave of later date than 1870 was found. None were of any especial interest with the exception of that of John Clary, who died in 1860 and on whose gravestone is represented Clary sitting on a stump with his gun in hand and a dog lying at his feet. He was known as a great hunter and was probably from the "Clary Grove Settlement," west of New Salem.

In the Cemetery at Petersburg many of Ann Rutledge's relatives are buried. Not far from

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

her lies the remains of Hannah Armstrong, whose son Lincoln, after he became a lawyer in Springfield, defended and cleared from the charge of murder.

Bolling Green, who figured prominently in Lincoln's life at New Salem, lies within two hundred feet of Ann's grave. As do many others of that village's residents.

Much seems to be made of Lincoln's unsuccessful business ventures while he was a resident in New Salem. So far as we have been able to ascertain, no one who might have been authority has ever refuted or questioned the truth of his failures, and Lincoln himself has been quoted as referring to the Lincoln and Berry partnership as having "petered out." At another time he mentions his obligations as the "national debt." Many are the stories emanating from that period in his life in New Salem which makes it appear that he lived desperately poor if not in fact on charity, trading on amiability and story-telling for corn bread, mush and milk.

Here again we believe imaginative exaggeration creeps into the pens of Lincoln's biographers, and that all that goes beyond Lincoln's jocular description of his distressful circumstances might be charged to competitive writers for the best description of destitute poverty.

Picturing a young man twenty-two years old, a boy in fact, walking the unimproved streets of a little village of pioneers all living in log cabins, fifteen or twenty in number, and forgetting all knowledge of the young man gained in later life, is it likely that one could single him out from other residents of near his

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

age in the village as more indigent than those he lived among? It is a strange thing that Lincoln himself never complained of poverty if he was so much worse off than his companions. The fact that he was "tall, awkward, and wore ill-fitting" clothes could have nothing to do with poverty; yet the adjectives, "awkward, ungainly and ridiculous" almost always are used along with every description of the man when poverty alone is meant. The significance of this combined description of appearance and penury by historians smatters too much of fiction and imagination very similar to the Ann Rutledge episode.

In New Salem at the time Lincoln was a resident there, probably there were fifteen or twenty more young men of about his age, and it is very doubtful if any of them could rate higher in business activity in the village than he, yet he is singled out by the historians as "ungainly" and "awkwardly" poor.

There was one time during the year of 1832 in which Lincoln was out of lucrative employment, and consequently without much money. That was the period between the closing of Offutt's store until going into business with Berry in September, a period of five months. Yet two months of this time he spent in the Black Hawk War, and, as we have before related, there is good evidence that some weeks were taken up by his long slow journey back to New Salem and a visit to the home folks on the Buck Grove farm. In the first month of his military service he was drawing a Captain's salary, and the balance of his service a private's pay. He may have been allowed milage for the home trip plus

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

expenses, and of course while at home he was at but little expense. This then, if rightly computed, leaves only two out of the five months for idleness and expense. From the many stories emanating from the New Salem life of Lincoln part of this time before going into business with Berry must have been devoted to working for farmers: splitting rails, helping build cabins, rocking cradles, and clerking in stores. Not all of these activities paid more than board and lodging, probably, but it is quite reasonable to believe that some of them did. In this five months, then, his expenses were light and his income sufficient for average living conditions.

On March 8, 1833, William F. Berry, in the name of Berry and Lincoln, applied to the court of Sangamon County, in Springfield for a license to keep a tavern. This was one year after the five months we have taken as a possible low income period for Lincoln while living in New Salem, but the prices they as tavern keepers were allowed to charge their customers will give a fair idea of the living costs prevalent in the times.

French Brandy, per half pint -----	\$.25
Peach Brandy, per half pint -----	.18
Apple Brandy, per half pint -----	.12
Holland Gin, per half pint -----	.18
Domestic Gin, per half pint -----	.12
Whiskey, per half pint -----	.12½
Wine, per half pint -----	.25
Rum, per half pint -----	.18
Breakfast, Dinner or Supper -----	.25
Lodging, per night -----	.12½

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

Horse, per night -----	\$.25
Single feed -----	.12½
Breakfast, Dinner or Supper for Stage Coach Passengers -----	.37½

If Lincoln earned as Captain, with one month's pay as private one hundred and seventy-five dollars and an additional eight or nine dollars for mileage and expenses home, this, with an average of fifty cents per day for job work for two months, leaving one month for visiting at no pay, would net him about \$214.00 income for the five months. Even at the above cheap rates for board and lodging, which he paid at no time while earning this money, he could have saved money and worn average clothing.

After this period, or from the time he went into business with Berry, it does not seem that he was ever without a source of income, however small. His partnership began with Berry in September, 1832, and continued until the next April of 1833. In a few days, May 7, he was appointed postmaster, but was no doubt clerking for Hill, the postmaster before him, even before he took over the office himself.

It is no doubt true, for Lincoln himself admits it, that some very clever deals were pulled on him which left him with the costs to pay, as said by him, "the national debt." Even with that bad luck, it cannot be said that he was not resourceful with at least an average financial ability.

Comparing the facts that have come down to us in various ways of Lincoln's financial enterprises and their earnings, we fail to see much

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

to place him below the average of his fellow townsmen in New Salem. Granting that he failed in business along with Berry, and with the Trent Brothers who fled the country, should he be less respected in the failure because he assumed their debts and ultimately paid them, assumed them in the face of the oncoming panic of 1837?

Lincoln was not the first, with Berry, to fail in business in that little pioneer town. Offutt, the wonderful trader and flatboat shipper to the New Orleans market, we are told closed his door in April of the year before and left town without disclosing his destination; yet no writer has ever described his appearance as "awkward" and "ridiculous" as he departed. The Rutledge and Cameron Promoting Company failed also, leaving the mill and tavern in the hands of their creditors, with Rutledge virtually accepting a form of charity by moving to the farm, at that time of his prospective son-in-law, John McNamar. None of these failures are heralded of course; only Lincoln, the only one of them who finally paid all of his and his partner's obligations, gets his personal appearance delineated as a sort of tar-and-feather punishment for doing the Lincoln way, the only way he ever knew.

Lincoln, so far as we know, never accepted charity or asked for help. He certainly never soured on the world for any misfortune which came to him. The proof was his growing popularity among the very people who knew about his failures. In 1832 he was defeated by a close vote for Representative to the Illinois Legislature. In 1834, after his financial failures he was elected by a good majority in a district

LIFE IN NEW SALEM

abnormally anti-Whig, and in 1836 his election was repeated. During all this time, besides making friends who were true enough to vote for him, he was studying to become a surveyor, having been offered the position as deputy surveyor by one who had been elected by his opposing party.

Chapter Fourteen

LINCOLN IN LAW

We have heard the name of Lincoln and remember his features as portrayed from our earliest memory, and our judgment and opinions of the man have been formed from about all the sources available: biographies, histories, and contacts with many older men who lived in his day, soldiers from both sides in the Civil War some of whom had actually had official contact with him and had heard some of his great debates with Douglas, and one story which we cannot forget told by a great-uncle who served on a jury before Lincoln in Illinois, in which trial Lincoln was attorney for the defense where a man had been charged with stealing sheep.

And so, from the sixty-five years in which our opinions have reached a definite status, one of which pity and sympathy for the great man now predominates as coming from the sources enumerated above, we still face the one great and unanswered question: why the greatest of all our Americans, Lincoln, should be singled out for baseless slander, and merciless vilification by biographers and historians such as came on after his assassination. And more, not only Lincoln suffered the attacks, but his father and mother, his grandmother, uncles and aunts and cousins, all have been pitifully,

LINCOLN IN LAW

sorrowfully, and helplessly slandered, and all by enemies who were never wronged.

These slanders, calumnies and misstatements, originating in the minds of bitter, almost mortal enemies, have been wrapped around the life of Lincoln and his relatives in proportion to the degree in which the relation existed. As an example, his father and mother being closest kin, took the greater part of the slander. His good step-mother, being of no blood relation, escaped while she, in truth a good woman, was no better than Thomas Lincoln.

Thomas Lincoln's life ended in 1851, at the age of seventy-five years. He had lived six years in Virginia, thirty-four years in Kentucky, fourteen years in Indiana and twenty-one years in Illinois. Conscious of the concerted vicious attacks on the character of this man and his innocent family by an array of historians after the assassination of his illustrious son, Abraham Lincoln, we have followed as best we could his footsteps in every conceivable and tedious way to ascertain the facts on which these writers based their opinions they have so positively stated. Whatever the opinions of others might be originating from what we have said of Thomas Lincoln and his people in Kentucky and Indiana, we ourselves are convinced that, in the light of positive facts from research in the public archives, of traditions coming from ancestral families, and reasonable deductions based on both records and traditions, we feel satisfied the Crusaders attacking the Lincoln family have blindly followed without reason one "Don Quixote" Herndon.

But what of Thomas Lincoln's life in the

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

twenty-one years he lived in Illinois? Was it different from our estimate of the man while he lived in Kentucky and Indiana? Unlike those two States, we have no public records except a few land transfers on which to base an absolute authentic opinion; no old ledger or the church minute book yet available to us as corner stones for fact finding. But, in our opinion we do have a record in Illinois, as true and honest, as authentic and reliable as the old ledger in Elizabethtown or the minutes of the old Pigeon Creek Church, and that is, the humble and innocent words recorded by Mrs. Eleanor Gridley in her interviews with John J. Hall for material for her book in 1892 while secretary for the Lincoln Log Cabin Association of Illinois.

By the words of John Hall, the baby we have so often spoken of as having come to Illinois with the Lincolns in 1830, we can feel sure of knowing more intimately the life of Thomas Lincoln and his wife Sarah Bush Lincoln than from any factual records we may ever find recorded anywhere. He was one year old when they arrived at their Sangamon River home. At no time in his life did he ever live out of neighbor distance from Thomas Lincoln, his grandfather by marriage. Until the age of twenty-one he was as familiar with the home life of Thomas Lincoln as a grandson can be who lives continually near the family. At the age of twenty-two he as a bachelor moved into the home of his grandmother to care for her at the death of his grandfather after her son, John D. Johnston, became restless and wished to go west. This unrest on Johnston's part called from the President the notable rebuking letter. For fifteen

LINCOLN IN LAW

years he lived with his grandmother as a bachelor. He married in 1866 and three children were born to them before the death of his grandmother in 1869. The last of them is our own particular friend, his daughter, Nancy A. Hall, still living on the Thomas Lincoln farm.

From known facts and family Lincoln lore we know Thomas Lincoln was not a wealthy man at any time, and possibly as poor while he lived in Illinois as any time in his life. But, not a day while living in Illinois did he live on a rented farm. It is also well known that not one of his farms, four in all in Illinois, possessed any other than a very ordinary log cabin. But, can it be said that a single neighbor in all the country at that time owned a more pretentious residence? The whole life of Thomas Lincoln was passed in log cabin days. Log cabins in Thomas Lincoln's day were no particular disgrace to the occupants, and never became such until years afterward, several years after the assassination of Thomas Lincoln's son, Abraham Lincoln. Thomas Lincoln was well along in his declining years when he moved into Illinois, which is ordinarily considered a handicap to growing wealth, yet, by stories emanating from family traditions and the words of John Hall he continued to work for twenty years.

One story goes that one day he was out by the road grubbing out a fence row. A neighbor passing stopped and said, "Why, Uncle Tommy, I thought you wanted to sell your farm, why do you do that hard work?" "So I do," said Uncle Tommy, "but I don't want my farm to know it."

And another story portraying him at work is told as follows: While John D. Johnston was

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

living with Thomas Lincoln before Johnston was married, he came home late one night with two young oxen which he had traded for. Not known to ever be over industrious at any time, this night found him so indolent as to tie the steers to a post out in the lot instead of putting them in the stable as he should have done. The next morning one of the steers was found by his grandfather dead at the post, having wound the halter in such a manner as to fall and break its neck. The accident occurring so recently that the animal was judged fit for beef, Uncle Thomas began immediately to dress the beast for table use. While busy at this expensive and compulsory job a neighbor passed by as neighbors sometimes do, saying, "Uncle Tommy, goin' to have some fresh beef, I see?" Without looking up he said in reply, "Yes, beef to my sorrow."

Such stories as the above coming from a truthful source make us believe that Abraham Lincoln certainly enjoyed his visits home if for nothing more than a family chat with his folks. What could be of more interest than to have listened in on a conversation between two wits of the type of Thomas and his son Abraham Lincoln on his numerous trips home on visits before the death of his father? We are further informed by traditions that Thomas Lincoln, while sorely aggravated by his step-son Johnston because of his shiftless nature, was patient in the extreme, no reprimand ever more than: "John, how careless you are," or "John, how wasteful you are," knowing full well possibly, that John would never learn.

Thomas Lincoln was said by our friend Nancy,

LINCOLN IN LAW

through her father, that "Grandpap was good to Johnston's children, would care for them and rock 'em to sleep and sing to 'em." The song he would sing was, "He-oh-a-nay, He-oh-a-nay, whoop," an Indian song which always stopped the crying child. It reminded us of our own grandfather's song to us while he rocked out a tune on the old hickory bottom chair without rockers, on the bare floor of our cabin. His song was tuneful and consisted of the repetition of these words, "Trow, trow, trow," ("ō" as in cow).

Thomas Lincoln kept up his religious activities in Illinois, according to the Halls. While in Indiana the family were Baptists. In Illinois they became Christians or Campbellites. John Hall further states that a Stanley Walker, a native of Kentucky, held meetings once a month in the east room of their log cabin. "Grandpap," Hall continued, "was so terrible religious that he never 'ud eat nuthin, nohow, without sayin' grace, and I can rekerlect as plain as can be jest what he said. It wus short, but it wus allers the same, and he never failed to say it, 'Fit and prepare us for humble sarvice. Beg fer Christ's sake. Amen.'"

It is mentioned by a great many writers that Abraham Lincoln acted and talked at times as though influenced by a degree of superstition, and that dreams especially bothered him. By the word of John Hall and our personal knowledge of a belief in superstition as a characteristic in his daughter Nancy, we can easily believe superstition might have been an inborn family trait. John Hall says: "Both Grandpap and Grandmarm Lincoln prayed so much, that they hed

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

a wonderful power about 'em to cure folks. Why, Grandmarm could draw out fire and Grandpap could cure a felon." Then Hall would relate how folks would come from miles around to get his grandfather to cure them, and all he would do was just to hold the sore finger in his hands a few minutes and say something in a whisper, "and every time he'd cure 'em sure enough." But his grandmother performed her treatment in a slightly different manner. She would just lay her hand on the burn and "shet up her eyes" and say two or three words and it would never hurt "no more." She had drawn the fire out of his own hands lots of times, and once she told him that if she ever divulged the secret to "arry a woman" she would lose her power, but if she told a man it would make no difference, then he says: "She did tell me afore she died what she said when she cured 'em, but I can't tell nobody."

John tells of the first money he ever made in this way: "Grandpap's only medder was two acres and a half a little north of the house in the east forty. I wus seventeen years old then and he said to me, 'John, if you will mow the medder I'll give you a yo.'" The next spring the sheep had three lambs and saved them all. In two or three years he had sold ten sheep out of his flock at \$1.25 apiece, "and so you see I got a start." When he talked to Uncle Abe about his money he said, "Now you can get married and build a home of your own."

It seems that old age for Thomas Lincoln might have been but a small handicap and interfered little in his religious worship. John Hall again states and the story is verified by his daughter Nancy that Thomas Lincoln walked

LINCOLN IN LAW

to church services at Charleston, a distance of eight miles once a month, stayed over Saturday night for the Sunday services and walked home on Monday morning.

Here, in defense of the Lincolns, we would beg to call attention to the Lincoln family vilifiers that this man, Thomas Lincoln, in his extreme old age walked the round trip to Charleston on week-ends to church. Not to saloons, beer joints, or wine shops, cock fights or horse races, but to church.

We go back to the friendly city of Springfield, Kentucky, where on a certain Sunday morning we met a friendly Mr. Bishop who spent an hour to find the County Clerk in order to let us into the courthouse to see the marriage record of Thomas Lincoln, then with Joseph Polin, from Springfield to the old deserted home of Frank Berry where he was married, to the cabin site where he first went to housekeeping and where we believe his children were born; to Elizabethtown where Thomas Lincoln carpentered; to the sites of his Kentucky farms; to his new home in Indiana; to his homes in Illinois and the separate cabin sites and finally to this last near Charleston. And think, in all these places in a period of nearly seventy years, not one single act in the life of Thomas Lincoln can be pointed to by his revilers which justifies their contentions to the slightest degree. And we come up to those same questions shrouded in mystery; how could they, and why did they defame the name of Thomas Lincoln?

For our part, we fail to see that any great difference would have resulted in the great work of Abraham Lincoln had all the scandal and vi-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

tuperation, vilification, and barroom gossip charged to the Lincoln family been true; as, for instance, suppose Thomas Lincoln was truly of the Southern white trash, would his son's Gettysburg Address have been less perfect? Or, suppose Lincoln, after the death of Ann Rutledge had actually shown signs of insanity, would the Emancipation Proclamation freed fewer of the colored slaves? Or, suppose his father and mother's marriage license had remained undiscovered, would that have justified Lincoln's traducers in saying Lincoln's was an illegitimate birth, and making it a positive statement? What, then was the object of these men?

For our own satisfaction we must say here, that if it takes such scandal as the Lincoln family has had to endure in the last century to produce a Lincoln we sincerely believe that this nation desperately needs a repetition of another such series of happenings often, and never worse than now.

The opposite of egotism and boastfulness in Lincoln's character was the secret of his greatness. Had it not been so he would have proved a failure. Continually mindful of his superior power of reasoning and clear insight into difficult problems of political conditions of his time, he was keenly aware of the necessity of minimizing that fact before his fellowmen. His enemies were his jealous friends with whom he was compelled to live, all, possibly, in their own transparent way endeavoring to cover up any outward show of envy because of Lincoln's towering intellect. Conscious of this blue blood environment as he found it at every turn, and in order to escape from it, only one sure reme-

LINCOLN IN LAW

dy presented itself; a visit to his home where he found peace, true and unenvious friends, a shade, a book and a chance for undisturbed study. This is verified by the stories of John J. Hall.

This mental concealment grew to be a second nature with Lincoln. It became so natural that he himself was totally unconscious of the disguise. Telling a good story and telling it well was probably his best means to keep mental endowment in the background and at the same time stand on level ground with friend and enemy. With the strong minds of the nation while President, the same innocent superiority of mind was kept submerged until it became necessary to use it. When that time came Cabinet Officers and Generals: Seward, Chase, Stanton, Hooker, and McClellan became as pawns on a chessboard.

Had Lincoln not have been the humble man he was, had he displayed egotism and arrogance to the slightest degree, he could never have reached immortal fame. He lived among and gained his position along with schooled and college men, passing them on the road to fame, and the passing was woe to the family of Lincoln.

Not one of Lincoln's vicious critics of whom we have knowledge but was educated in the best schools of the time. Some were teachers and college professors, others lawyers, lecturers, and some professional biographers. One sat across an office table from Lincoln for nearly twenty-five years in awe, pity, disgust, wonder, hatred, and admiration for the uneducated Lincoln, never realizing that in due time, he, Herndon, his partner in law, would spend another twenty-five years after Lincoln's assassination

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

in contriving a comfortable seat for himself in the chariot of Lincoln's immortal fame. A sort of hitchhiker to glory.

It is our opinion that Herndon never quite condescended to admit the truth: that Lincoln, uncouth, ungainly, ugly, even a baboon in the estimation of Stanton; awkward, humble and un-educated, the product of "Southern white trash," and coming from a "putrid pool" could possibly outshine all the blue blooded educated men of the times as the sun outshines a candle. Undoubtedly the keen mind of Lincoln was aware of this hidden resentment, and relied greatly on his peculiar personal appearance to annul any show of arrogance or superiority because of mind supremacy. His studied correlation of personal appearance and story-telling for smoothing out and adjusting himself to the common run became a part of him. He became humble Abe Lincoln by the same means that made him great, by hard study. Among schooled and college men he found it wise to be humble. With all his boasted power of reading character, Herndon in our opinion missed his guess, missed finding the key to Lincoln's greatness, the art of being humble. So, he maneuvered him into being the son of a Virginia nobleman.

Believing in his theory that Virginia blue blood solved the enigma of Lincoln's great intellect, he began earnestly to gather facts to bolster and substantiate it. As we interpret the many letters from Herndon to several co-partners in their effort to produce the only great biography of Lincoln, it would seem that he acted very much as a steam engine without a balance wheel. He let enthusiasm lead him into

LINCOLN IN LAW

eccentric actions. His ears were keen to hear the slightest rumor if it supported his new theory of the solution of his law partner's genius, but dull indeed if it contradicted it. At one time Herndon considered the testimony of Dennis Hanks as reliable; later, since Dennis could never be made to say that Lincoln's mother was an illegitimate child, or "base born," he immediately became a "liar." So long as he was a good witness, he was trustworthy. When he became a bad one, he was not. He seemed bent on injecting better blood into Lincoln's veins than that which flowed through the Hankses and Lincolns, and the "wish" was his impelling force. In his hunt for superior blood, he listened to any man, regardless of character. The barroom Enloe fight myth only shows how willing Herndon was to fish in the "putrid pool" for sustaining evidence to smear the family of his own benefactor, Abraham Lincoln.

But what can be more strange than finding later twenty-five or thirty educated college men such as Woodrow Wilson, Albert J. Beveridge, and many others falling in with Herndon's wish to rescue Lincoln from the lowly common people to blue blood aristocracy? Such selfish jealousy was never before manifested in history to our knowledge.

We have often wondered what Lincoln's estimate of Herndon might have been. Herndon was almost ten years younger than Lincoln. With nothing more for evidence than what might be formulated from reading Herndon's many attempts to put his opinions of Lincoln in writing, we have concluded that Herndon was accepted by Lincoln as only a young student of law, and never

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

became much more than a very reliable handy man in the partnership. Lincoln's great work was on the "circuit" but he needed an office in Springfield, and of course an office boy was necessary. While Lincoln rode the circuit, Herndon kept office, would meet new clients, make notes, and hunt statutes which might apply to cases. In all important matters, in our opinion, nothing was done until Lincoln returned from the circuit. Herndon of course did have wonderful opportunities to study the character of Lincoln, and to use his wonderful power --of which he seems so fond of boasting--to penetrate the mind. We can easily believe that when Lincoln stepped out into their office, by a mere glance on Herndon's part, he could easily tell whether he should speak first, or let Lincoln do it. It is said that Lincoln often read aloud to himself, believing the sound of the spoken words made the subject more clear than by silent reading. Likewise we can believe that when discussions of law occurred between them, Herndon became an object for Lincoln to direct his views at, and not to, by which he obtained the same benefit as when he read aloud to himself.

As Lincoln came gradually to the front in law, and in local, state, and finally national affairs, Herndon himself took on importance as the law partner of Lincoln. We can believe he reveled in this sort of absorbed glory, making himself seen and heard among Lincoln's associates as though he was the power behind the throne. He was not asked by Lincoln to make the Eastern trip in which he saw Greeley, Trumbull, Seward, Garrison, Phillips, Parker, and

LINCOLN IN LAW

others. He wrote twenty-five years afterward that he only "inferred" that Lincoln wished him to go. He went, "saw them, and set them right for Lincoln, saw the country, returned, received the cordial thanks of Lincoln." He also wrote twenty-five years after this notable freewill offering that he paid all his own expenses out of his own pockets; not out of the common till of the Lincoln and Herndon partnership. To our notion he writes of Lincoln as not quite his equal. Back of every sentence he wishes to give the impression that he gratuitously pushes aside his own importance in order to be generous to Lincoln. His Eastern trip was an example. By his interviews with these prominent men of the time he told the story in such a way as to slyly give the reader the impression that in reality, he, Herndon, was the great molder of the nation's destiny; that Lincoln was only a tool which he had discovered.

In the original Herndon letters, speaking of this trip to the East, we find this: "To be sure, the youthful and ardent Herndon always began the correspondence; yet, even so, it was to him and not to his partner that these brilliant men, molders of the public opinion of the time, looked for reports of conditions in Illinois. It is extremely curious that, judging from their letters to Herndon, these leaders seemed not to have realized that Lincoln amounted to anything during that period."

The above is a quotation from Emanuel Hertz, January, 1938, but as it was in quotation marks with Beveridge previously quoted, we suppose he was the original author. At any rate, the quotation seems to be intended as a compliment to

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Herndon. If not, what was the meaning of the author when he said: "It is extremely curious that, judging from their letters to Herndon, these leaders seemed not to have realized that Lincoln amounted to anything during that period." Our interpretation of the above would be that these leaders by the tone of their letters had for some reason believed that Herndon himself, not Lincoln, was the power in the West that "amounted to anything." And who, if not Herndon gave them that impression? And why, if not for his own self laudation did he misinform them? We wonder, too, if these Eastern leaders had not yet heard of the Lincoln-Douglas debates? Or did Herndon fool them into the belief that Lincoln was only a Charlie McCarthy on his political knee?

The author of the above also states: "For years before his (Lincoln's) nomination for the Presidency, Herndon wrote to such men as Parker, Sumner," etc. "For years," who can believe that such important correspondence originated with Lincoln's own law partner, in Lincoln's own office, on a subject as important as the Presidency of the United States, all without the knowledge of Lincoln--of all men? If the author believes this, he certainly cannot expect his readers to do so.

It is more logical in our opinion to believe that Lincoln saw every letter that left his office in his interest for the Presidency in those "several years," and that at least some of them were actually dictated by him.

The whole story of the Herndon Eastern correspondence in the interest of Lincoln's candidacy for President, including his trip in which

LINCOLN IN LAW

he "saw the country" at his own expense, reflects in our opinion to Lincoln's credit; to his farsightedness and astuteness. If all this maneuvering went on out of Lincoln's office secretly by Herndon and resulted in Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency, there is of course nothing left for us to do but remove our hats to Herndon. On the other hand, if Lincoln did know about it, as we believe he did, finally capitalizing on it, at the same time allowing Herndon the role of "Big I," we would respectively leave it to the reader as to whom the joke was on.

Herndon reports in his biography of Lincoln that he was always addressed by Lincoln as "Billy." Lincoln had a son while he lived in Springfield whom he named William. This son he always addressed as "Willie." We have often wondered if this dissimilar nickname for "William" was not for the purpose of making a distinction between his office boy "Billy" and his own son "Willie." Herndon, in his many letters of instructions to his collaborators working with him on his biography of Lincoln seemed to impress upon them the wonderful opportunity that was his in applying his great gift of reading the character of men, and especially that of Abraham Lincoln, which he was twenty-five years in doing. Lincoln, no doubt, had finished the job as to Herndon's mind within a week, and was making practical application of the result every day of their partnership.

Herndon tells of Lincoln's last visit to their office just before leaving Springfield for Washington and quotes Lincoln as saying: "Billy, let the shingle still read, 'Lincoln and Hern-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

don' to let the people know that the election to the Presidency makes no difference." We wonder if this was not Herndon's request of Lincoln.

In due time Herndon was on a farm west of Springfield a few miles. Many times in his correspondence to his partners in history writing he confessed to being poor and hard put to meet his obligations, needed money, was raising vegetables and once "digging his taters." Had he have been a successful lawyer, one even capable of making a living, he might not have been driven to hard work on the farm. When the possibility of Lincoln's return to Springfield faded because of his assassination, evidently Herndon gave up the law. There might have been some extenuating proof that Herndon was more than an office boy for Lincoln, but it certainly is not manifested in the latter part of life. Herndon, the great analytical mind reader, the maker of a President, descended to the lowly "digging his taters"; Lincoln, the uneducated product of the "Southern white trash," ascended from the lowly log cabin to the White House.

Chapter Fifteen

THE PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We have given considerable space to the defense of the Lincoln family against what we believe a concerted, vicious, and violent outbreak of base and weakly supported evidence. A family long dead, beyond all power of self-defense, and with the greatest misdemeanor or deviation from rectitude charged, not one was ever greater than that of being "poor." Even at that, none have charged that Thomas Lincoln ever failed to pay a debt. Can we say the same of all the charitable writers' families (three generations back)?

We quote from an interesting list of the "Lincoln Kinsman" of February, 1941.

Albert J. Beveridge:

"No more ignorant boy than Thomas (Lincoln) could be found in the backwoods."

Nathaniel W. Stevenson:

"His parents--drifting, roaming people, struggling with poverty--were dwellers in the Virginia mountains."

Lea and Hutchinson:

"The unhappy child was left to the tender mercies of strangers in a wilderness swarming with savage beasts and still more savage men."

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

James Morgan:

"He was as often called 'Linkern' or 'Linkorn' as Lincoln, because he himself did not know how to spell his name."

N. Stevenson:

"A shiftless fellow, never succeeded at anything, who could neither read nor write."

Ward H. Lamon:

"He was idle, thriftless, poor, a hunter, and a rover."

William Coleman:

"He was an indolent, happy-go-lucky, contented tramp."

N. Stevenson:

"A shadowy figure, this Thomas; the few memories of him suggest a superstitious nature in a superstitious community."

John T. Morse, Jr.:

"Shiftless migratory squatter by invincible tendency, and a very ignorant man."

W. Coleman:

"From all accounts, an ignorant, shiftless vagabond."

Rose Strunsky:

"He reached the age of twenty-seven, the year of his marriage, a brawny, wandering laborer, a poor white, unlettered and untaught, except for his trade of carpentering."

W. Lamon:

"Nobody alleges he ever built a house, or pretended to do more than a few little odd jobs connected with such an undertaking."

William Herndon:

"He never fell in with the routine of labor; was what some people would call unfortunate

THE PRESIDENT

or unlucky in all his business ventures--if in reality he ever made one."

William M. Thayer:

"Slave holders and wealthy men looked down upon him as a menial of hardly so much account as a slave."

Eugene W. Chafin:

"Thomas Lincoln was an ignorant, worthless, shiftless, illiterate man."

W. Herndon:

"Not only devoid of energy and shiftless, but dull."

J. Rogers Gore:

"He had the wandering foot, and looking for other locations for a home was his hobby."

Carl Schurz:

"A typical 'poor southern white'; shiftless and improvident, without ambition for himself or his children, constantly looking for a new piece of land where he might make a living without much work."

Denton J. Snider:

"Nomadic Tom Lincoln belongs really nowhere, and so he cannot find out where he belongs."

J. Morse, Jr.:

"He constantly sought to change, since it seemed that no change could bring him to a lower level than he had already found."

N. Stevenson:

"Vagrants, or little better than vagrants, were Thomas Lincoln and his family making their way to Indiana."

Nicolay and Hay:

"His earthly possessions were of the slightest, for the backs of two borrowed horses sufficed for the load."

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

W. Lamon:

"Where he got the horses used upon this occasion it is impossible to say. His decision (to move), however, was hastened by certain troubles which culminated in a desperate combat between him and one Abraham Enloe. They fought like savages; but Lincoln obtained a signal and permanent advantage by biting off the nose of his antagonist."

Madison C. Peters:

"Thomas Lincoln was a poverty stricken man, whom misfortune had seemingly chosen for her own, and whose ambitions were blighted and hopes almost dead."

Frederick T. Hill:

"An ignorant man, amiable enough, but colorlessly negative, without strength of character, and with no ambition worthy of the name."

Robert E. Knowles:

"A poor specimen of the 'poor whites,' synonym for ignorance and superstition to half a continent. To the day of his death he could neither read nor write."

Lord Charnwood:

"He never seemed to have left the impress of his goodness or anything else on any man."

Woodrow Wilson:

"Abraham Lincoln came of the most unpromising stock on the continent, the 'poor white trash of the South.' His shiftless father had moved from place to place in the western country, failing where every body else was succeeding in making a living; and the boy had spent the most susceptible years of his

THE PRESIDENT

life under no discipline but that of degrading poverty."

In addition to the statement of Beveridge which we have quoted, "No more ignorant boy than Thomas (Lincoln) could be found in the back woods," we also find that he contended sincerely to the last of his life that Abraham Lincoln was an illegitimate child; that his conclusion was based primarily on the supposition that Thomas Lincoln was physically deficient--a myth originated by Herndon and set afloat by him.

Is it possible for anyone to read the above quotations and have the least idea of what these highly educated authors were trying to prove? Here we have quotations from about twenty different writers telling us in twenty-eight different ways that Thomas Lincoln was a "poor" man, when all the world has known that fact since his son became President of the United States; that the son himself proclaimed it; that the son never complained or held aught against his family for being poor, but on the other hand considered it honorable. Honorable all the days of his life, as one of his good deeds before leaving for Washington was to visit his step-mother, one of the last of his family.

Let us admit that Thomas Lincoln might have been poor relatively, but the records show that he still was no more in want than his contemporary pioneer neighbors; even his cruelest vilifiers say he had a trade in addition to farming--one would naturally believe this might help in times of stress--and to that extent he was above the average of his neighbors.

It will be noticed that all of the above

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

writers whom we have quoted have made positive statements. None were in doubt. Now, since they seemed to have been so very well-informed, is it not a little strange that not one of these forgiving writers did not add to the "terrible" crime of being "poor" the crime of murder, manslaughter, thief, drunkenness, wife desertion, a one time slaveholder while he lived in Kentucky, or a renter who failed to pay his debts? All that was needed was a positive statement from them, proof wasn't necessary.

One thing we can be reasonably sure of, if Thomas Lincoln had been the father of one of the above historians, not one of them can we believe would have ever shown him the slightest respect, especially if they had reached the heights his son attained.

There is one phase in the above quotations which seems to us a little amusing. Beveridge "sincerely believed" that Thomas Lincoln was not physically capable of being a father, by which contention of course he wished to give out the impression that Abraham Lincoln was not Thomas Lincoln's son, but the son of some person of a little bluer blood than Thomas possessed. All the while the other writers were racking their sympathetic minds to find descriptive words to fit the awful penury of Thomas Lincoln, who, according to Mr. Beveridge, was not the father of Abraham at all.

We also believe it would be a little amusing to have Mr. Beveridge try to place the man in his proper division of the human race, who, like his Thomas Lincoln, not capable of being a father, yet goes on from year to year maintaining a home for his wife Nancy while she proceeds

THE PRESIDENT

to raise a family of three children from some other man.

But, with this combination of writers as a whole, in spite of their numerous contradictions, one with another, all seemed to have the general idea that penury, pioneers, log cabins and Thomas Lincoln were synonymous terms. And for a man like Abraham Lincoln--of all men--to spring from that fusion of impurities was a little too much to take; so, to them, any theory that afforded an avenue of escape was a relief.

The question presents itself again, what object could all of these writers have had? None of them knew Thomas Lincoln personally, certainly then, they had no personal grudge; none knew of his own personal knowledge that what he said of Thomas Lincoln and his family was true, yet none expressed doubtfulness in what he said. All could have said that Abraham Lincoln's father lived in the early pioneer days when log cabins housed the rich as well as poor; that from authentic sources Thomas Lincoln was in possession of land from the time he was about twenty-five years of age until his death at the age of seventy-five; that he owned as much as forty to several hundred acres. As land in his Kentucky days was cheap he could not be considered wealthy; or, on the other hand extremely poor. But no such charitable description of Thomas Lincoln's life was given. Yet this man raised a son who said: "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

What then, can be the object of these highly educated writers in reducing the father of Abraham Lincoln in the minds of their readers to the lowest depths of depravity? The most

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

charitable answer, as we see it, is a sort of wish, born of jealousy, to bridge across from their own commonalty to the inaccessible heights of Lincoln's immortal fame.

If only one of the above writers had made his statement, let it even be a positive statement, it might be accounted for by judging the author as careless, thoughtless, or possibly one who felt sure of his ground; but, since twenty or more have risked their reputations as writers of true history on nothing more than the statement of some one who had no more personal knowledge of the dead than they themselves, what other explanation can there be than the one above?

Were these men conscious of their uncharitable and unproven slanders toward an innocent man and his family? In a way, perhaps they were not, although the result is the same. Their crime may be classed along with unintentional manslaughter, with a possible additional charge of running away and leaving the victim drowning in a "putrid pool."

In all the past, to our knowledge, there is no page in history so darkened by vultures--who have passed as writers--which compares with this in sneering, scoffing, and flouting disrespect for the innocent dead as the above comments hold for the family of Abraham Lincoln. Can any one think of a single exception?

Turn back and read again what Herndon said, what Knowles, Lamon, Hill, Snider, Woodrow Wilson and others said. Then ask these questions of each of them: Did you know this man Lincoln? Will you swear to the truth of what you have said? How can you be so positive? Is it, in

THE PRESIDENT

your opinion, such a terrible disgrace to be poor? Please tell us, Mr. Herndon, Mr. Hill, Mr. Snider, and all of you, just why you said these things. Why?

We can be certain that had Thomas Lincoln's son never been born, Thomas Lincoln would have been as obscure in history as the day he died in 1851. Or, had Abraham remained in comparative obscurity all his life the results would have been the same; therefore, since Abraham Lincoln did not remain in obscurity, we can with certainty charge the defamation of the Lincoln family directly to the fame of Lincoln.

But other great men have lived before Lincoln whose families or ancestors may have been as disreputable or more so than that of Lincoln's, yet historians have not dwelt on their misdeeds. Why, then, was the Lincoln family the only one in history to have to take a concerted scandal?

Certainly, Abraham Lincoln was something different from any other man whose families were let alone. That difference must have been the reason and the only reason that brought the family defamation of Lincoln.

Our theory, then, is that Lincoln lived constantly in an atmosphere of jealousy among his associates from the hour he left his real and true friends, the common people. This began at the time he left New Salem and went to practice law in Springfield. When he arrived in Springfield, his intellect began to manifest itself as unusual among his fellow lawyers. Since he came out of nowhere in particular, with no schooling and no refinements, his intellectuality soon became an enigma. He was an

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

intellectual Gulliver among the Lilliputians. Jealousy and resentment followed him to his assassination. And they lingered on and on.

There are numerous recorded instances in the many biographies where Lincoln was subjected to shameful humiliations after leaving New Salem and going among the more refined. While only a few of these incidents are needed to clear the point, we can be sure that where one incident found its way into print, there were hundreds which happened of lesser importance and were lost to the writers, but which were as shameful and hard to endure as were the greater ones.

Probably the most cutting courtesy which ever fell to Lincoln's lot (of those we find in the books) is that which came from Edward M. Stanton while trying the famous McCormack case in Cincinnati. As the story is told, Stanton--at first sight of Lincoln--remarked in Lincoln's hearing to some one that he would not be seen in court with such an ungainly looking baboon as Lincoln. The result was that Lincoln did not make an appearance during the trial, although he had gone to considerable trouble to prepare himself.

We are further told that Lincoln returned home greatly mortified, but said little. This is reasonable to believe. The phrase "but said little," in our opinion, is significant. He did say little, but thought quite a lot. Thinking was the only reserve which he had full confidence in. And in our opinion before Lincoln reached Springfield from Cincinnati a sharp jawed trap was set for a certain fox that paraded under the name of Edward M. Stanton. The time came, the trap snapped.

THE PRESIDENT

The election came in 1860 and Lincoln was elected President. A cabinet had to be chosen. As we get the facts from history, Lincoln's selection of men brought some criticism from his close friends. Some of his chosen ones had shown political antagonism to him--had supported opposing candidates to him in the Chicago convention. This fact, as it was pointed out would bring discord in his administration from the very start.

We believe that Lincoln had a double purpose in selecting his pre-election opponents: first, he thought they were the ablest men in the country; second, if they were in his cabinet he would have his worst critics corralled. In the cabinet, their best would be directed toward saving the Union. While if left outside the cabinet they would be left free to continue their criticisms without any restraint. This would hurt his administration.

In addition to this, we have another view which we have never seen in print. It supports our view in regard to the cause, the basic cause, for the defamation of the Lincoln family.

In spite of the fact that Abraham Lincoln, in the course of human events was winning innocently immortal fame, he had to live a human life. He was human. Being human he was subject to human frailties. Among his frailties were (the one most noticed by all who have self-respect to the slightest degree) the many personal insults and discourtesies he was compelled to endure in silence. Because of his backwoods appearance and his illiterate background his associates believed there could be no equality between them. By the time he was elected Pres-

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

ident he had the true measure of all the public characters in the nation. His great debates with Senator Douglas gave him confidence in his ability to cope with all emergencies in his contacts with men of all types: the keen, the dull, the high, and the low. For twenty-three years, or from the time he went to Springfield to live, he had encountered more than his share of indignities similar to that at Cincinnati by Stanton.

He had made his way by sheer intellect, still contrite and humble, a place superior to them all. Stanton's baboon became Stanton's chief. The chief was a spider, and the spider had spun a web. The web was the cabinet, so, "Please walk into my parlor, said the spider to the fly." Stanton was trapped for the duration, for four years, as we get it from State papers which passed up from the War Department for the President's approval. No caged hyena ever snarled so viciously and found itself so helpless as Stanton did during the years previous to the assassination of Lincoln. He had been given a free hand in the conduct of the war. His generals gave him trouble. He could only quarrel with them privately, not publicly. For if he did he would be criticizing his own War Department. When Stanton became so terribly exasperated and wished to go beyond authority, he would get a little reminder from the President somewhat similar to the soft paw of a kitten as it keeps a captured mouse corralled. As in the case of Daniel Winger (a fourteen-year-old boy who had been sentenced to be shot) the order came from Stanton to Lincoln for his approval; Stanton received this reply: "Dear sir:

THE PRESIDENT

Hadn't we better spank this drummer boy and send him back home to Leavenworth? A. Lincoln." "It is better," he writes to Stanton again, "for the public service that he (an Adjutant General) give his time to the business of his office, and not to personal attendance on me... my view of the matter is as I have stated. A. Lincoln."

Stanton was not the only fly in the web. Seward was high man in the Chicago convention but soon lost his lead to Lincoln. In the formation of the cabinet, Lincoln made him Secretary of State. The highly intelligent and educated Seward mistook the meaning of the western backwoodsman--whom no doubt he had often heard Stanton refer to as the Ape. He believed that Lincoln only wished him as adviser or manager to relieve him (Lincoln) in the management of a white elephant, the Presidency.

On Inaugeration Day, March 4, 1861, Seward offered to resign the Secretaryship of State because Lincoln refused to let Seward name his cabinet. Lincoln refused his resignation, saying afterward, "I couldn't afford to let Seward take the first trick." In about a month Seward undertook once more to line the President out, still believing him incompetent to run the Government. This time he sent a note to the President which, in our opinion, looks like impudency, since he should have hardly recovered from the sting inflicted the month before. The title of the advice to the President was "Some thoughts for the President's consideration." It begins, "We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign." The one time flatboatman

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

answered, "At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said: 'The power confided in me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts.' This had your distinct approval at the time; and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact policy you now urge..." We would say that Lincoln took the second trick, also.

Lincoln's correspondence with his Generals (McClellan, Meade, Hooker, and others) was as convincing as his state documents that he understood their military problems as well or better than they themselves, though he was in Washington, and they on the front. To McClellan, October 24, 1862: "I have just read your dispatch about sore-tongued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything? A. Lincoln."

The truth is that the state documents of Abraham Lincoln are so clear, concise, and pointed, (so singularly superior to most government documents) that they are as interesting as a novel.

Closing, it would surely be in place to express the view that our country today would find itself in perfect safety with families like Thomas Lincoln's and his fellow pioneer neighbors scattered throughout the land. It was they who gave Abraham Lincoln his inspiration for the Gettysburg address and the Emancipation; and who would no doubt say to us to-day,

THE PRESIDENT

"Go back to the principles of George Washington, of Thomas Jefferson, to the Bill of Rights and stand by the Constitution in spirit as well as principle." Answering the dreamers, they would say, "No, no, it is better to be a century slow, than one year too fast; let your national debt be your guide."

In the light of recent research and the possibility of further discoveries through the archives in all the Lincoln localities over the country (such as the notable work of The Lincoln Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana) we wish to say this in defense of the many mistaken writers whom we have quoted throughout this manuscript: All of them, Beveridge, Wilson, Stevenson, Charmwood, and even Herndon would say, "We're sorry."

Could they have had just one short talk with the last remaining emigrant who came in the old ox-wagon to Illinois with the Lincolns and who knew Thomas Lincoln and his family best of all! Could they have been told by him of a certain good honest man--of the love his family and neighbors had for him, of his many week-end trips (walking both ways) to Charleston to church, of his quiet home life, and of his little prayers, "Fit and prepare us for humble service. Beg fer Christ's sake. Amen."! We might all say with him, John J. Hall, "How we wish we could see Grandpap and Grandmarm and Uncle Abe once more."

THE ELM

The tree mentioned in the accompanying poem is still standing and is estimated to be 200

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

years old. It stands opposite to the north end of the Shepherd Road about three and one-half miles southeast of Lebanon, Indiana, on Road 52, and nearly a half mile south of the C. C. C. & St. L. R. R. over which the Inaugural Lincoln Train passed on its way to Washington, D. C., in February, 1861, and also the funeral train on its way back to Springfield, Illinois, in May, 1865.

When I was young, around me stood,
The Beech, the Linn, and Cottonwood.
All were giants of forestry,
Tall and great, they seemed to me.

With spreading branches, reaching high,
With leaves and vines which hid the sky,
While I was yet a little tree,
I grew beneath this canopy.

I've heard folklore among the trees,
As sighed to me by gentle breeze,
Of things they saw when they were young,
And of traditions, elders sung,

Of siests and snows and wintry rains,
Of lightning blasts, and hurricanes.
All these they weathered, as of plan,
Until there came the axe of man.

I saw the giants fall and crash,
Till all were felled with cruel lash.
No, not all, yet all but one,
For Fate left me, an elm, alone.

THE PRESIDENT

Standing as a sentinel,
Many stories I can tell,
Not alone of tales of tree,
But things I've seen, now history.

As, when the Red man, moving on,
Passing this way, woe-begone,
Stopped in view to hesitate,
Silently camped, moved on to fate.

The path he trod was then to be,
The hunter's trail, eventually,
And then the man with axe in hand
Felled the forest and made the land

A barren, lonesome place for me,
For now I stand a Lone Elm Tree.
Because I stand beside the trail,
I owe my chance to tell this tale.

As I did once before relate,
'Twas here I grew to my estate;
And now I feel it is my place
To act the part of one to face

The lot of all, both man and tree,
And linger on to destiny.
I tower above, and look below,
See mankind passing to and fro,

Each with face of woe or peace,
Happiness, hate, or sacrifice.
But all go on, pass out of sight,
As hidden by the darkest night.

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

Two hundred years I've seen, and more,
The good, the bad, the rich and poor;
Some pass by early, and some are late,
Yet go as though decreed by Fate.

The tramp, the beggar, and vagabond,
With halting gait, have gone beyond.
And many fortunes Gypsies told,
While camped beneath, in days of old.

And once, when I, of middle age,
Saw surge on surge of passion rage,
Destined to bring the greatest storm,
This land as yet had ever borne,

Saw to the north, on track of steel,
A train move out from West, on wheel,
All decked in flags of stripes and stars,
'Twas speeding East, there were two cars.

A month or two another scene
Appeared beneath. A call, foreseen
By him who saw the gath'ring storm,
The tall sad man, almost forlorn.

And then I saw what he had seen,
The tumult raging from within,
The Country, severed, bringing war,
The call for men from near and far.

Beneath I saw men going through,
To join with others, donning Blue.
They to meet, the breeze did say,
To join in conflict, men in Gray.

THE PRESIDENT

As news comes through to trees by air,
'Twas gloom, then light, and then despair,
Then, brighter yet, the horizon.
The news came back, the Blue had won.

And then, ah, then, the gloom of war,
Was brighter than a brilliant star
Compared to that with whispering breath
Came o'er the land. The news was Death.

A tree, as I, did sigh and wail,
I saw once more the cars on steel.
This time, somber, moving West,
Coming slowly from the East.

And, as I stood and looked upon
That black draped train, which soon
was gone,
I knew, I knew, with no word said,
I knew 'twas Lincoln, Lincoln--Dead.

Of all I've seen, in all my years,
Of all the times I've been in tears,
That despondency, lingering on,
Has never reached oblivion.

Could I, at will, by beck or call,
At times when clouds come over all,
And when our Country, in distress,
And all seems doomed to hopelessness.

Could I yet stand your sentinel,
And look again for cars on steel,
I promise you, both day and night,
I'll be again your beacon light:

DEFENSE OF LINCOLN FAMILY

With waving arms I'll signal all,
There's Hope again. An answered call
To common man, though illy dressed,
As Lincoln came from out the West.

